

PERSPECTIVES ON EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT

(REPORT OF A SEMINAR)

Edited by

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With a foreword by

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Madras Regional Branch

Indian Institute of Public Administration

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FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in writing this foreword to this Report which is the second of its kind in the history of the Madras Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration. It will be recalled that the first Report was released recently by Sardar Ujjal Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu, at the time of the third Seminar held on the 11th and 12th of October 1969 at Madras. The present Report deals primarily with the subject of "Assessment of performance of employees" discussed in considerable depth at the second Seminar held on 21st and 22nd of December, 1968 at Madras. I record with pleasure that as many as 47 persons took an active part in this seminar which took on the form of an inter-branch seminar in which there was high level participation both at the official and at the non-official level from the other branches in the region, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Kerala and Pondicherry.

I was largely responsible for deciding the subjects discussed at this Seminar. So far as the subject of redressal of public grievances is concerned, it had already been discussed at the branch seminar held in August 1968 and it was further discussed at the inter-branch seminar. I would, therefore, confine my remarks in this foreword to the subject of "Assessment of performance of employees". The subject assumed urgency in Tamil Nadu State because of the insistent representations from the Tamil Nadu Non-Gazetted Officers' Union for the outright abolition of the system of personal files and a slightly less extreme proposal of the Tamil Nadu Secretariat Association for making the system an open one. Before advising the Government of Tamil Nadu in my capacity as Chief Secretary as to the best method of dealing with these representations, I thought it would be advisable if the views of a professional body like the Indian

Institute of Public Administration could be ascertained. I am glad that the deliberations at the inter-branch Seminar proved of great help to me in processing the case in the Secretariat. Broadly speaking, there was agreement at the inter-branch Seminar that the assessment of employees should be on a scientific basis founded on the graphic rating method, that the employee concerned himself should be given an opportunity to give short account of his work during the period under report and that ultimately, there should be scope for an overall assessment which has necessarily got to be of a confidential nature in order to relieve the reporting officer of any possible inhibitions arising from the embarrassment involved in an open system.

An important decision taken at this inter-branch seminar was that in future every branch in the Region should hold at least once a year a branch seminar on a select subject followed by an inter-branch seminar to be held by turns in each of the branches in the region. If possible, the subject discussed at the Branch Seminar should be decided before hand so that the same subject could be discussed in depth and in a wider background subsequently at the inter-branch seminar. I hope that this decision will be implemented, as it will serve the purpose of co-operative functioning of all the branches in the region in a spirit of friendliness and understanding.

I hope that the Madras Branch is now well set on the way to continue to make sustained progress in serving the interest of professionalism in public administration and that we may look forward to regular annual seminars in future organised by this branch.

MADRAS,
16-11-1969,

C. A. RAMAKRISHNAN,
Chairman

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

By the success of its deliberations, the State level Seminar previously held by the Madras Regional Branch in August, 1968 had confirmed the view of the Branch that for a Seminar to be successful, subjects should be carefully chosen, a wide and representative participation must be secured and considerable home work done before the Seminar assembled. The Inter-Branch Seminar held by the Branch at Rajaji Hall, Madras on the 20 and 21 December, 1968, followed this pattern. In choosing the subjects the following points were borne in mind:

1. The subjects should be important enough and something to which all delegates could usefully contribute. It is necessary to avoid too many subjects on the agenda since that would result in hurried and incomplete discussions.
2. The subjects should be such that Working Groups may be formed, if necessary, so that the matter could be discussed in detail and the Working Group could report to the Seminar.
3. The subject should be such as will be of interest to the Government as well as the Private Sector and it should enable a fruitful exchange of views between them.

Having these points in view, the following subjects were chosen :—

- (1) Methods of assessment of the performance of employees—A perspective discussion in the light of Government and Private Sector procedures ; and
- (2) Redressal of Public Grievances.

The latter subject had been discussed in depth in the Seminar of August, 1968 and what was intended was a follow up discussion in the light of the experience of all the participant Branches of the Inter-Branch Seminar.

The Regional Branches were requested to prepare Working Papers and send them in advance. There were to be two Working Papers on each subject from each Branch, one representing the views of the public administrators and the other those of the Private Sector.

The Regional Branches of Andhra Pradesh, Mysore and Madras and the local Branches of Kerala and Pondicherry sent representatives to the Seminar. Each Branch was invited to send five delegates each, including two from the private sector. The actual number of delegates sent however, varied with reference to the availability of delegates and the convenience of the Branch. Andhra Pradesh actually sent a strong team of six delegates whereas other Branches were in a position to send only two. There were six representatives from the private sector industry. Three Legislators, two M.L.As., and one M.L.C. and three representatives from the University attended. Col. S. L. N. Reddy, Col. in charge of Administration of the Madras, Mysore and Kerala area attended on behalf of the Army and Dr. S. Chandra on behalf of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad. The association in the Seminar of the service unions of Government employees was found to be mutually beneficial. The representatives of the Tamil Nadu N.G.G Os Association, Tamil Nadu Secretariat Association and the Madras Civil Service (Executive Branch) Association attended. Last but not the least two representatives of the I. I. P. A., New Delhi attended and took an active part in the discussions. They were Prof. K. N. V. Sastri and Prof. V. Jagannatham.

The Seminar was made possible by a generous grant of Rs. 5,000/- from the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi,

PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Friday — 20—12—1968 :

10-00 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Inauguration and Plenary Session.
11-30 a.m. to 1-00 p.m. 2-30 p.m. to 5-00 p.m.	Group Discussions.

Saturday — 21—12—1968 :

PLENARY SESSION

10-00 a.m. to 11-00 a.m.	Discussion on 'Redressal of Public Grievances'
11-30 a.m. to 1-00 p.m. 2-30 p.m. to 4-30 p.m.	Discussion on 'Methods of Assessment of Perform- ance of Employees'
4-45 p.m.	Concluding Session.

LIST OF WORKING PAPERS CONTRIBUTED METHODS OF ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

1. A Working Paper on 'Methods of assessment of the Performance of Government Employees' ANDHRA PRADESH
2. Employees assessment — principles & practices ANDHRA PRADESH
3. Appraisal and Reporting of Employees performance in public and private sector undertakings in Kerala by T. Madhava Menon KERALA
4. Methods of assessment of the performance of employees — by S. Venu. MYSORE
5. A Working Paper on 'Methods of assessment of the performance of employees' PONDICHERRY
6. Personal Files—What, How & Why. By C. V. Munuswami, President, Madras Secretariat Association. MADRAS
7. Methods of assessment of the performance of Government employees—M. K. Balasubramaniam. MADRAS
8. Abolition of Personal Files—Working Paper of Tamil Nadu Non-Gazetted Officers Union MADRAS
9. Methods of assessment of the performance of employees—by S. Visvanathan, Sunder Raj and A. Padmanabhan. MADRAS
10. Methods of assessment of the performance of employees—By R. Subramonia Iyer. MADRAS
11. Additional Material for discussion on methods of assessment of the performance of employees—by W. S. Sivasankar. MADRAS

12. Personal File System—
by R. R. Dalavai MADRAS
13. Personal Files—Why & Why not
A Question Raiser by K. Venka-
taraman MADRAS
14. Methods of assessment in private
sector industry by T. V Naraya-
nan Nair MADRAS
15. "Assessment of employees per-
formance in general with parti-
cular reference to E. I. D.—Parry
Group" by L. J. Fernandez MADRAS
16. Methods of assessment of the
performance of employees and
the problems connected with it.
by S. M. Diaz. MADRAS

REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

1. Machinery and Procedure for
Redress of citizen's grievances. ANDHRA PRADESH
2. A Working Paper on Redressal
of Public Grievances. PONDICHERRY
3. Extract from "Machinery & Pro- INDIAN
cedures for redress of Citizen's INSTITUTE OF
Grievances" by V. Jagannatham & PUBLIC
H. R. Makhija. ADMINISTRATION.
4. Report of Working Group I of
the Seminar on Redressal of
Public Grievances (August 1968)
by H. K. Ghazi. MADRAS
5. Report on Working Group II of
the Seminar on Redressal of
Public Grievances (August 1968)
by S. P. Ambrose MADRAS
6. Redress of Public Grievances—the
dimensions of implementation
by K. Venkataraman. MADRAS

LIST OF DELEGATES WHO ATTENDED THE
INTER-BRANCH SEMINAR HELD ON
21 AND 22 DECEMBER, 1968 AT RAJAJI HALL

[A substantial number of officials and non-officials attended the Seminar and participated in the discussion. This list is confined to official delegates.]

I. ANDHRA PRADESH :

1. Thiru K. N. Anantaraman, I. C. S. (Retd.)
Vigilance Commissioner,
Government of Andhra Pradesh,
HYDERABAD.
2. Dr. V. K. Bawa, I. A. S.,
Director of State Archives & Member-Secretary,
Backward Classes Commission,
HYDERABAD
3. Thiru S. Chakravarthy, I.A.S.,
Joint Collector,
HYDERABAD.
4. A. M. Lal,
Chairman,
Vazir Sultan Tobacco Co., Limited,
HYDERABAD.
5. Thiru A. Mukherji,
M/s. Vazir Sultan Tobacco Co., Limited,
HYDERABAD.
6. Thiru P. L. Bhandari,
M/s. Sirpur Paper Mills Limited,
HYDERABAD.

II. KERALA :

7. Thiru T. Madhava Menon, I.A.S.,
Managing Director,
Travancore Titanium Products Limited,
TRIVANDRUM-7.
8. Thiru K. V. Kunhunni Menon,
Deputy Director (O & M) and
Deputy Secretary to Government,
Public Department,
Government of Kerala,
TRIVANDRUM.

III. MYSORE :

9. Thiru K. Narasimha Murthy,
Hon. Secretary, I.I.P.A.,
Mysore Regional Branch,
Vidhana Soudha, BANGALORE.
10. Thiru S. Veru,
C/o Imperial Tobacco Co., Limited,
Frazer Town P.O.,
BANGALORE.

IV. PONDICHERRY :

11. Thiru S. Seetharaman,
Under Secretary to Government,
Appointments Department,
PONDICHERRY.
12. Thiru R. Lakshmikanthan,
Under Secretary to Government,
Public Works Department,
PONDICHERRY.

V. I. I. P. A. :

13. Prof. K. N. V. Sastri,
'RAVI NIVAS'
10, West Park Road,
Malleswaram,
BANGALORE-3.
14. Prof. V. Jagannadham,
Director-in-charge,
Indian Institute of Public Administration,
Indraprastha Estate,
Ring Road,
NEW DELHI-1.

VI. LEGISLATORS :

15. Thiru K. Vezhavendan, M.L.A.,
112, Solayappan Street,
Old Washermanpet,
MADRAS-21.
16. Thiru S. Ramachandran, M.L.A.,
36, I Main Road,
C. I. T. Nagar,
MADRAS-35.

17. Thiru G. Swaminathan, M.L.C.,
No. 2, Rajappa Nagar,
THANJAVUR.

VII. UNIVERSITY :

18. Dr. C. A. Perumal,
Prof. & Head of the Department,
Department of Politics & Public Admn.,
University of Madras,
MADRAS-5.

19. Thiru R. Jameel Ahmed,
Lecturer,
Department of Politics & Public Admn.,
University of Madras, MADRAS-5.

20. Selvi T. Kalyani,
University Research Scholar,
C/o Dr. C. A. Perumal,
Prof. & Head of the Department,
Department of Politics & Public Administration,
University of Madras, MADRAS-5.

VIII. ARMY :

21. Col. S. L. N. Reddy,
Colonel in-charge Administration,
HQ. Madras, Mysore & Kerala Area,
MADRAS-16.

IX ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLECE HYDERABAD :

22. Dr. S. Chandra,
Administrative Staff College.
HYDERABAD,

X. SERVICE ASSOCIATIONS :

23. Thiru C. V. Munuswami,
President,
Tamil Nadu Secretariat Association,
MADRAS-9.

24. Thiru M. K. Balasubramaniam,
Joint Secretary to the Madras Civil Service
(Executive Branch) Association,
Additional Assistant Secretary,
Food Production, Board of Revenue,
MADRAS-5.

25. Representatives of N.G.G.Os Association.

XI. MADRAS :

26. Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan, I.C.S.,
Chief Secretary to Government,
MADRAS-9.
(Chairman, Madras Regional Branch)
27. Thiru S. Visvanathan, I.A.S.,
Member, Board of Revenue,
Chepauk, MADRAS-5.
28. Thiru M. Sunder Raj,
F. A. & C. A. O. Integral Coach Factory,
MADRAS-38.
29. Thiru A. Padmanabhan, I.A.S.,
Director of Employment & Training,
MADRAS-6.
30. Thiru R. M. Seshadri, I.C.S., (Retd.),
Advocate, High Court Buildings,
MADRAS-1.
31. Thiru T. V. Narayanan Nair,
Industrial Relations Manager,
Tube Investments of India Ltd.,
11/12, North Beach Road,
MADRAS-1.
32. Thiru L. J. Fernandez,
Personnel Officer,
E. I. D. Parry & Co.,
MADRAS-1.
33. Thiru K. Venkataraman, I.A.S.,
Deputy Secretary to Government (Services),
Public Department, Secretariat,
MADRAS-9.
34. Thiru W. S. Sivasankar,
Administrative Personal Assistant to the
Director of Women's Welfare,
Central Office Buildings, Teynampet,
MADRAS-6.
35. Thiru E. N. Narayanaswamy,
Deputy Director of Industries & Commerce,
Chepauk,
MADRAS-5.

36. Thiru D. Natarajan,
State Editor, District Gazetteers,
State Archives Buildings,
Egmore,
MADRAS-8.
37. Thiru K. Venkatasubramaniam,
Joint Director of Rural Development (Education)
MADRAS-9.
38. Thiru R. R. Dalavai,
Convenor,
Medras Civil Liberties Council,
'Sevashram',
83, Big Street, Triplicane,
MADRAS-5.

WORKING GROUPS

After the inaugural session, the participants, divided themselves into three working groups :

WORKING GROUP I

General principles of assessment procedure

WORKING GROUP II

Norms & forms of evaluation

WORKING GROUP III

Redress of public grievances-
dimensions of implementation.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Working Group I

Thiru P. L. Bhandari
 Thiru L. J. Fernandez
 Thiru K. V. Kunhunni Menon
 Thiru A. M. Lal
 Thiru C. V. Munuswami
 Thiru A. Padmanabhan
 Thiru S. Ramachandran
 Thiru W. S. Sivasankar
 Colonel S. L. N. Reddy
 Prof. K. N. V. Sastri
 Thiru S. Visvanathan
 Thiru Devanathan

Working Group II

Thiru M. K. Balasubramanian
 Dr. S. Chandra
 Thiru T. Madhava Menon
 Thiru A. Mukherji
 Thiru K. Narasimha Murthy
 Thiru T. V. Narayanan Nair
 Thiru E. N. Narayanaswamy
 Thiru S. Seetharaman
 Thiru M. Sunder Raj
 Thiru G. Swaminathan
 Thiru S. Venu
 Thiru Thiagarajan
 Thiru Kothandaraman.

Working Group III

Thiru K. N. Anantaraman
Dr. V. K. Bawa
Thiru S. Chakravarthy
Thiru R. R. Dalavai
Prof. V. Jagannadham
Thiru R. Jameel Ahmed
Selvi T. Kalyani
Thiru R. Lakshmikanthan
Thiru D. Natarajan
Dr. C. A. Perumal
Thiru R. M. Seshadri
Thiru K. Venkatasubramaniam
Thiru K. Vezhavendan
Thiru Sivaelango.

PERSONAL FILES—WHY AND WHY NOT

A QUESTION—RAISER

BY THIRU K. VENKATARAMAN, I. A. S.

The system of maintaining personal files on individual Government servants has been with us for a long time. It is not clear when exactly it was introduced ; what is clear is that the system has very much been taken for granted, something like the weather, so that no questions have been asked. Recently, however, the *raison d'être* of personal files has come up for debate.

2. The system of maintaining records which depict the performance of an individual over a period of time has obvious merits ; it enables decisions on promotions and the selection of the best ; it also enables placement of Government servants in jobs for which they possess marked aptitude. Besides, any officer taking over an office can gather an idea of the men who work under him by going through the personal files. The basic features of this system as it obtains in Madras are :

- (i) It is usually written half-yearly ;
- (ii) The report is usually written by a Reporting Officer who is the head of the office in smaller offices or an officer of a suitable rank in higher offices. This report is countersigned by a higher officer.
- (iii) What is recorded is kept confidential and is never known to the person reported upon except to the extent that adverse remarks of remediable defects are communicated to him. The person concerned has a right to appeal for expunging such remarks.
- (iv) Suitable forms have been devised and suitable instructions issued to enable a fair and comprehensive assessment of the person reported upon.

3. The basic question is why the report should be confidential. We should not forget that such a system has some merits. In a sense, it is a method of securing discipline and

control without going through the cumbersome process of a disciplinary proceeding ; besides once an officer's view on his subordinate is known to the subordinate, then the daily relationships are bound to suffer. No opinion on a man can be so good as that entertained by the man himself and it is only too easy to think that one is not given one's due. Hence the traditional administrator would regard the abolition or modification of the system as an egregious step.

4. Two things stand out when one evaluates the system as it is to-day. Firstly, there is a growing feeling that the system is a farce and an evil farce at that. It is now frequently argued that Reporting Officers do not give a fair and unbiased picture of the persons they report upon and that the field is open for all kinds of nepotism and corruption. There are some people who strongly hold the view that these reports are written on communal lines and that the system has, on this score, become obnoxious. So the argument is that the system of personal files should be abolished or at any rate modified into an open system like that of the army where what is reported upon, whether good or bad, is known to the person reported upon.

5. Secondly, the system has fallen into a rut by imperfect implementation. Sometimes, reports are not written up at all. Sometimes, they are written up far too late for the officer to retain a proper perspective of the individual's work ; adverse remarks remain uncommunicated either for a length of time or for ever. Often they are written sketchily giving no clue whatsoever to a man's performance. A vague and non-committal report of a few lines is a favourite practice with many officers, who find it convenient either because of lack of familiarity with the man's work or because of fear of being challenged. A careful, comprehensive and purposeful assessment is an exception rather than a rule. Promotions themselves nowadays follow seniority rather than merit as disclosed in personal records, and this factor forms a vicious circle which dilutes the system. The cynic would look askance at merit promotions since, he says, he knows what stuff the personal file is made of. Besides, appeals for expunging adverse remarks are not infrequent and always couched in terms which question the *bona fides* of the Reporting Officer. The Reporting Officer is practically put on the dock and rather than face all kinds of questionings, he would write a non-committal report. When all these facts are taken into account there is a case for arguing that the personal file system as it works to-day hardly serves any purpose.

6. But it would be unwise to forget that Government are interested in efficient public administration, which requires the selection of men of merit and their placement in suitable jobs. Do we throw the baby with the bath water or scrub it ? The abolitionist can be driven to a corner by asking him to spell out what alternative arrangements he would make for—

- (i) merit promotions and even promotions of all fit persons according to seniority after rejecting the unfit ;
- (ii) placement of persons in suitable jobs *and*
- (iii) the availability of information to a new Head of Office about his subordinates.

7. The abolitionist will hit the ball out of the court so far as item (iii) is concerned saying that each Head of office has to find for himself how his subordinates are. As regards items (i) and (ii) he will argue that the Head of Office at the time of the event, can as well make recommendation about suitability for promotions and placements. But this would magnify the abuses in a personal file system since while previously we had atleast the reports of a number of persons about a person's work, we will now have to rely on the report of one and one person only who in addition may or may not have sufficient knowledge of the person reported upon.

8. If the abolitionist's argument is clearly impractical what kind of changes are necessary ? Having ruled out razing the structure to the ground, should we advocate spring cleaning, structural alterations or additions or complete re-building?

REDRESS OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES-THE DIMENSIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION

BY K. VENKATARAMAN, I.A.S.

The problem of redress of public grievances is an age-old problem but that does not mean that it requires no solution. The need for a solution is, if any, greater today than ever. Recent thinking and discussion have largely focussed attention on the creation of special agencies to deal with the problem. Useful as such discussion is, it is in a sense, out of focus. It is important to realise that every officer, who has anything to do with the public is, *ipso facto*, a grievance officer. There is so much that can be done to set the house in order. This was well borne out by the State-level seminar that the Madras Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration conducted in August, 1968. It was attended by district officers drawn from various departments and by some legislators, panchayat union chairmen and municipal chairmen as well. The Seminar was oriented to the district level, since, the district being the arena where grievances arise and should be redressed, some concerted thinking and action aimed at that level is necessary. The nature and classification of grievances is a well-mapped territory and the explorer can find nothing much that is new. Spectrally, public grievances range from the unarticulated to the well-articulated, the degree of articulation having no necessary relationship to the urgency or genuineness of the grievances. The grievances may relate to an individual or public purpose and may be voiced by the individuals or groups affected or by intermediaries. Grievances may be voiced at different levels different from the one at which they can be redressed.

What is now necessary is to spell out the individual measures that can be taken for a speedier and more satisfactory system of redress. Firstly, there are measures that can be taken by individual officers or departments or by the Government itself without any substantial effort or reorganisation. We may cite a few such measures.

To start with, all representations must be acknowledged. No doubt it is being done even now at the district and higher levels but it must be done even at the taluk level and in respect of all persons. For those who come to give their representations in person there must be a minimum of facilities for sitting and waiting. We must start by equipping at least the bigger offices with reception rooms. Information must be readily available to a visitor who is new or is not sufficiently

equipped to go about his business himself. In this connection, a Grievance Counter has been suggested for the bigger offices where, on specified dates, the head of the office could sit and receive petitions and on other days some other officer could. The Madras Government have also recently passed orders providing an information counter in Government offices dealing with the public and to post well informed persons with the object of eliminating touts and expediting matters concerning receiving of applications delivering replies, licences etc.

There is no need to stress that a Grievance Counter should not itself become the source of grievances. This is not something that looks after itself. An officer must be courteous and give the petitioner a reasonable opportunity to explain his case as many grievances arise or are magnified for want of a proper and sufficiently patient hearing. If the officer concerned would not himself be able to remedy the grievance, information should be supplied as to who should be addressed and what formalities have to be gone through.

This leads us to the question of orientation of government servants. It is not impossible to devise, at very limited extra cost, a training programme for government servants in public relations and in the handling of public grievances. If proper orientation is not a thing that can be taken for granted, what kind of incentives or deterrents are necessary? Incentives are a stranger in many areas of government service; but redress of public grievances is one very good reason why incentives should be introduced to government servants. A purposeful modification of the form of confidential reports on government servants can be an incentive as well as a deterrent, if confidential reports do matter. There must be sufficient stress on inspection reports also on this aspect of a government servant's work and this must be an area of work which the superior officer should constantly guide and supervise.

This leads us in turn to the responsibility of superior officers. Their role is not only of guidance and supervision. By their administrative policies, they can seek to ensure that grievances are represented to the appropriate levels which can redress them. Petitions forwarded at higher levels can be forwarded in the shortest possible way to the appropriate lower authority. Dealing with petitions or their copies at various levels will add to administrative work and kindle confusion. Hence superior officers can improve matters by desisting from handling, as a matter of routine, grievances that can be redressed at lower levels and from entertaining repetitive appeals.

where no appeal would lie and where no new point has been put forward. And they can do their best to allay the apprehension felt by their subordinate officers that they will not stand by their subordinate officers even in legitimate cases, if the latter's conduct should be questioned.

A series of small steps can thus be taken, which will improve the framework for redress of grievances. Individually these steps appear elementary but together their effect may be substantial. Many of them can be implemented by individual officers or departments and require no orders from outside authorities. Where orders are necessary from Government they could be drafted and issued within a period of two months, if an officer is specifically charged with this task even if it be in addition to his regular duties.

We now come to the next area of redress, where the steps to be taken are still administrative but require more time and effort for implementation. Efficient administration would automatically lead to speedier disposal of business and prompter attention to grievances. Conceted and determined attempts to clear the shrubs and overgrowths in the paths of administrative procedure are yet to be made. The story is the same in the matter of delegations also. All this is wellknown but the results being meagre, the problem is how to create sufficient momentum so that any substantial reform may pass through atmospheric friction and against gravity and go into orbit. I think the civil servants must be given a period of three years in which to streamline their administrative procedures or some intelligent man from outside the system, acting as the personal adviser to the Chief Minister should be asked to impose some of the changes.

The third area of redressal merges with the larger problems relating to good government. The prerequisites of prompt redress of grievances are in a large measure the prerequisites of good government itself, viz , freedom from corruption, freedom from political interference etc. One interesting suggestion that emerged from the Seminar of 1968 was that if legislators were to sponsor requests from individual members of the public, they should meet only the District Collector or the District head of department and not any of their subordinates. It was felt that if this kind "code of conduct" were to be evolved, the general complaint of political interference at various levels of administration would largely disappear. This is a suggestion worth exploration and fit for further dialogues with non-officials. But all such attempts may have greater

chances of acceptance or success, if administrators could prove that they have, on their part, set their house in order.

From a practical point of view, this is the border-line where the discussion enters the vaporous realms of generalities. This is apt to be so, particularly when the attempt is to spell out steps common to all departments. The Seminar of August, 1968 made it abundantly clear that a fruitful approach to further study of this problem would be to study individual departments in depth. There are grievances peculiar to each department and sometimes they could be redressed without any cost. Grievances arising in the distribution of inputs in agriculture, of civil supplies etc. are cases in point. A necessary step is therefore to constitute study groups for select departments with officials as well as interested non-officials and legislators as members and then implement the suggestions made by them.

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP-I ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

CHAIRMAN :

Prof. K. N. V. Sastri

MEMBERS :

Thiru S. Abid Hussain
 Thiru P. L. Bhandhari
 Thiru L. J. Fernandez
 Thiru K. V. Kunhunni Menon
 Thiru A. M. Lal
 Thiru C. V. Munuswami
 Thiru S. Ramachandran
 Col. S. L. N. Reddy
 Thiru W. S. Sivasankar
 Thiru S. Viswnathan
 Thiru R. S. D. Winston
 Thiru Devanathan

RAPPOREUR :

Thiru A. Padmanabhan

The Working Group discussed the general principles of assessment procedure of employees. Besides the members, there were other participants also. Under the term 'employees', two broad categories were taken into account, viz. employees in the private sector and employees in the public service. As for private sector, the procedure that now obtains is one of merit-rating and performance evaluation at the level of workers and supervisory staff at the workshop. In respect of clerical and other managerial staff at the higher levels, there is a system of confidential report with a bias towards the development of the individual employee in respect of his contribution to the profits of the organisation. The organisation is, in short, production-oriented and it takes steps to improve the efficiency and development of its employees. A summary of views on the private sector is given in the Annexure.

As for the employees in public service, divergent views were possible and given expression to. One view was for total abolition of the personal file since it is a hang-over of the past -the British days. The other view was for the retention of the personal file, with an open system of communication of remarks, both good and adverse and a tightening of the

existing rules and procedures pertaining to the maintenance, communication of remarks, appeals, etc. While discussing these views, reference was also made to the practice obtaining in the Army.

In the Army, it was indicated, there is a confidential report maintained for Junior Commissioned Officers, with provision for communication of adverse remarks, representation, etc. Even for the non-commissioned officers, there is what is called the 'Continuous Character Role' maintained at the higher levels. As for the officers, Dossiers are maintained for them. There is a provision to show the concerned officer the confidential report which may contain strong and weak points. This officer has got the right to represent either to the Chief of the Army Staff or to the Government. It was also indicated that promotion from the rank of Second Lieutenant to the rank of Major is mostly based on seniority, subject to the rejection of the unfit, which was illustrated to mean serious omissions and punishments. In respect of ranks above the Major, the system followed is one of selection, where the dossiers play a significant role.

The Kerala experiment relating to personal file was also discussed. The salient features of this system as elucidated at the discussions comprised :

- (1) Categorisation of posts as 'seniority posts', 'seniority cum-merit posts' and 'selection category posts';
- (2) Categories of posts up to the level of Upper Division Clerk are 'seniority posts' and promotions are made on the basis of seniority;
- (3) Seniority-cum-merit counts for promotion to non-selection posts;
- (4) As a rule, all gazetted posts are classified as selection posts and come within the purview of the Selection Board;
- (5) In respect of 'seniority posts', there is no personal file; punishments, if any given, are indicated in the Service Roll itself; and
- (6) The report, wherever it is written, in respect of 'selection' and 'seniority-cum-merit' posts, is shown to the Government servant, who can make representation against any adverse remarks in the report.

The Mysore State follows almost the same system in Madras. But there is no provision for appeal against adverse remarks. It, however, provides for communication of commendations or appreciation. But wherever a representation is made, it is filed with the personal file and at the time of selection or promotion, this representation is given due consideration.

The Group generally felt that assessment of employees' performance in any organisation is important to the employers and the employees. Motivation and promotion policy are important factors to achieve efficiency and smooth working of any organisation, private or public. The Working Group considered it necessary to have a system of assessment which should be the basis for deciding selections and promotions. It also noted that the working of the present system of personal file is defective,

- (1) in not depicting the real performance or worth of the Government servant;
- (2) the reports being either fragmentary or colourless or almost unusable; and
- (3) adverse remarks either not being communicated or communicated late, without any regard to the provision for appeals against such adverse remarks.

The originators of the personal file system would have been influenced by utilitarian considerations and efficiency of the organisation. Over its chequered career, the system gathered several defects in working and hence the representation for either total abolition of the system or for its improvement. The Working Group felt that there is a good deal of force in the argument that the present system needs revision.

The Working Group generally felt that assessment record or personal file in respect of workers and staff in whose case there is no need for skill or any special requirement, is not necessary. For example, in an office, there is no need for personal file for attendars, lower division clerks and upper division clerks. In respect of these categories, it was the general feeling that seniority should be sole criterion for promotion except in the case of those unfit, which means acts of omission and punishment.

The following constitute the general consensus of the Group :

- (1) There should be a method of assessment and a record of report;
- (2) The Government servant himself can give quantitative data to the reporting officer through his immediate Section Officer dealing with his work, giving an account of the work done by him, commendations obtained, etc over a given time;
- (3) The data will be filed in original with the record of report;
- (4) With the help of these data and other information which he may obtain by himself, the Reporting Officer will make an assessment in writing;
- (5) This report will be shown to the Government servant and his signature obtained upon it, before being sent to the Reviewing Officer; and
- (6) The Government servant should have a right of appeal against adverse remarks, if any.

The Working Group felt that the above suggestions would bring about greater contentment among the employees and efficiency in the organisation, and are capable of implementation in stages.

ANNEXURE

SUMMARY OF VIEWS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE.

(Views of Mr. A. M. Lal and Mr. P. L. Bhandari.)

I. Unless confidential reports are objective and oriented to work they can do more harm than good. Appraisals should be performance based as far as possible. Reporting should be geared to the extent of contribution made, with a view to developing the individual and making him more effective within a work situation. No reporting should be done in isolation on subjective impressions by the reporting officer.

II. All such reports should be discussed with the individual concerned with a view to helping his development. A sense of participation should also be introduced so that the individual benefits from criticism and praise.

III. At Officer level, the various qualities of management being reported upon, should be broken down into easily understood components and attributes which makes the assessment more accurate and objective. There should be no ambiguity in the meaning of words such as "satisfactory" and the degree of a particular quality should be qualified by examples.

IV. In the case of non-gazetted officers and clerical staff norms should be created after evaluating each function. At the lowest level there should be a merit rating system which has the full participation of the workmen.

It would appear from the opinions expressed at the group discussion that rightly or wrongly the personal file in Government is now suspect in the eyes of the employees. Psychologically a substitute must be found for the personal file and this could be a performance record which should be an open document.

To reiterate, the approach should be to try and improve the individual rather than to find fault and leave the matter there. There should be a productive oriented purpose in the assessment of the employees, which is missing in the case of the Government employees.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE REPORT OF WORKING GROUP-I

Comments of the Rapporteur on the discussions arising out of the Working Group-I's Report.

1. The discussion threw up two broad schools of thought. One was that the personal file system should be abolished in toto. And the other was for the improvement of the personal file system, except at the lower levels where it could be abolished. The Seminar was not able to spell out exactly the categories of employees for whom the personal files are not necessary.

2. It was indicated that in order to bring about efficiency, the system of mention-in-despatches, as obtaining in the Army, may also be adopted in the Civil Service.

3. It was also mentioned that along with the open personal file system, there should also be a Departmental Promotion Board.

4. It was also mentioned that before assessing the officer's work, there is need for continuous counselling and guidance of the bad and indifferent elements in an organisation.

**ENCLOSURE TO WORKING GROUP REPORT I :
NOTE ON MYSORE PRACTICE.**

The Mysore State follows almost the same system as Madras. The Rules in Mysore, however, provide for both commendatory and adverse remarks being communicated to the officer concerned. There is no provision for any appeal being preferred against such remarks and if a representation is nevertheless submitted it is filed. The very fact that such a representation is filed might lead to an impression that it might be taken into consideration when the cases of such officers come up for selection for promotion.

**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP II ON THE NORMS
AND FORMS OF EVALUATION.**

Chairman :—Thiru T. MADHAVA MENON, ics

The Group has taken into consideration the various phases of the performance of persons in the Government undertakings, the private sector and the public sector, and has reached the following conclusions.

Objectives of performance appraisal

- (1) To provide a systematic method of assessment of all personnel, drawing attention to individual strengths and weaknesses and leading to improved performance by enabling stress to be laid on the strengths and corrective measures to be taken on weaknesses.
- (2) Identify those who are better suited for other positions, either by transfer or promotion.
- (3) To provide additional information to assist superiors making recommendations for promotions, transfers, etc.
- (4) To assess needs for training in individual cases and decide on the type and method of training necessary, either for better performance in the same position or, for taking over other positions and for employee counselling generally.
- (5) With a view to achieve the above objectives, to make available recorded opinions of superiors concerned in a manner, which will ensure maximum objectivity.
- (6) To review norms of recruitment policy.

The Group emphasised that the performance appraisals should under no circumstances be used for initiating disciplinary proceedings against any employee.

The Group considered the comparative merits of collective as against quantitative appraisals. While the Group recognised that a quantitative appraisal has the benefit of being objective, it would be inappropriate for higher jobs and in fact for most jobs in Government departments. The Group, therefore, recommends that quantitative appraisals should be adopted only where the jobs themselves could be quantified.

The Group was of the opinion that it is necessary to train the raters themselves. This is particularly important in the case of the Government organisations where rating techniques have been adopted as matters of routine. It should be part of the training courses for Government officers to include a syllabus on the techniques of performance appraisals. Private and public sector undertakings, it is understood, already do train their senior executives in this regard. The Group, however, recommends that it would be advisable for all organisations to include such training.

Techniques of rating

The Group considered the various techniques of rating adopted in the Government service and in the various companies. The Group is of the view that any scientific technique of rating should be preceded by an evaluation of the jobs to be done. But this, by itself, is not sufficient. This exercise should highlight the various skills and personality factors that may be necessary to perform the job efficiently.

The Group recommended the adoption of the graphic rating scale as the most appropriate form for appraisal. The Group, however, emphasised the need for a clear definition of the terms that will have to be used when devising such scales and appraisal forms.

The techniques to be adopted should, in summary, include the following :—

- (1) Graphic rating scale.
- (2) Factor comparison.
- (3) Every factor should be taken up separately and independently for assessment.
- (4) Every assessee in the organisation falling within any specific category should be judged on each factor before moving on to the next factor.
- (5) Wherever possible, at least two persons—the superior and his immediate superior—should jointly evaluate the assessee.
- (6) Immediately after the assessment has been made, the assessee concerned should be called by his superior and the assessment discussed. It should be ensured that the assessee

concerned appreciates the assessment. The assessment will be entirely personal to the assessee, that is, no other person in the organisation will be aware of its contents.

(7) There shall be a review system, and the assessment shall be reviewed by the next senior man in the hierarchy, wherever such seniors are available.

Performance factors

Every organisation should make a detailed study of the various levels of responsibility and the factors relevant to those positions, for example, 'Decision-making ability' for managerial positions and 'ability to get along with people' for all positions.

In every organisation, the existing norms of performance appraisal should be thoroughly reviewed. The objectives outlined above should determine the definition of factors. If necessary, the norms should be revised in order to make the system accord with the objectives.

Form

In view of the time lag between the end of the review period and the performance appraisal and also the busy time of the executive, particularly, in Government organisations, it would be more feasible to use a graphic rating procedure. There should also be a column for a brief essay-type report indicating the strong points, the weaknesses, and the corrective measures that should be taken to improve the assessee's performance.

Frequency of Appraisal

The Group was of the opinion that generally there should be an appraisal once in a year, but when the report is unsatisfactory, it should be done at least twice a year with the object of improving the assessee's performance.

The Group was of the view that the assessing authorities should themselves be judged on the objectivity, coverage and depth of the assessment they make of their subordinates.

Special recommendations in respect of Government Depts

(1) The Group recommends that normally no officer should appraise any employee unless he has at least three month's experience of that employee's work.

(2) The previous report should not be seen by the reporting officer.

(3) The corrective measures should take a concrete shape by providing the necessary training in the job or, if required, at formal courses, which should be organised for the purpose.

If the above objectives or any of them cannot be achieved in respect of any organisation or category of employees, the norms and forms suggested above will have correspondingly limited applicability.

**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP III
ON REDRESS OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES**

Chairman : Thiru K. N. ANANTHARAMAN, I.C.S. (Retd.)

Rapporteurs : Sri S. CHAKRAVARTHY & Dr. V. L. BAWA

Present :

Sri D. Natarajan
 Sri R. R. Dalavai
 Sri S. Parthasarathi Ayyangar
 Dr. P. S. Kumaravelu
 Sri Singarajan
 Sri A. Kothandaraman
 Sri Subramaniam
 Sri S. Aravind
 Dr. C. A. Perumal
 Sri R. Jameel Ahmed
 Sri R. Lakshmikanthan
 Selvi T. Kalyani
 Sri K. Vezhavendan
 Sri R. M. Seshadri
 Sri M. Umesh Rao

The working group took up for discussion the following papers in seriatim.

1. Redress of Public Grievances—The dimensions of implementation by Sri K. Venkataraman.
2. Report of Working Group I of the Seminar held in August 1968 by Sri H. K. Ghazi
3. Report of the Working Group II by Sri Ambrose.
4. Report of the Pondicherry branch.
5. Machinery and procedure for redress of citizens, grievances—prepared by Andhra Pradesh Branch.
6. Extracts of the paper by Sri Jagannatham and Sri H. R. Makhija.

The Working Group was of the opinion that very great importance should be given to the various points at which the

Administration and particularly the District Administration comes into contact with the people. It was strongly felt that every officer dealing with the public is *ipso facto*, a 'grievance officer'. The public grievances range from the unarticulated to the well-articulated, the degree of articulation having no necessary relationship with the urgency or genuineness of the grievances. Grievances may be represented by an individual or group affected or by an intermediary or group of intermediaries. The following are the important comments and recommendations of the group :

1. It was generally felt that all representations from public must be acknowledged. There was general agreement that although anonymous or pseudonymous petitions could not be acknowledged action on such a petition should not be entirely ruled out in cases where specific allegations of corruption are made and verifiable details given. This is necessary as there are a number of cases of large scale corruption having been uncovered only through this means. No action should be taken on complaints which are *prima facie* false or frivolous. Even in those few cases where a preliminary enquiry or a regular enquiry is considered necessary, precautions should be taken to ensure that the prestige of the officer is not unnecessarily damaged. In short, the greatest discretion should be exercised, especially in cases of enquiry into allegations of corruption and moral turpitude.

2. Suitable facilities should be provided in all public offices for the convenience of those who wish to make their representations. Reception counters and visitors' rooms are necessary in all offices where the staff is one hundreded in strength and also in all important offices like the taluk office, where public come in large numbers. A full time or part-time receptionist may be appointed depending upon the nature and volume of work involved in dealing with the public.

It was also felt that the head of the office should be freely accessible to the public on specified days of the week even without prior appointment. He should give advance information of his availability at the headquarters. On other days also he should be accessible if he is at headquarters; or the next in command at the office should be required to receive representations on his behalf.

3. Complaints and suggestion boxes may be installed in all public offices at prominent places and petitioners may be encouraged to use them, rather than wait long hours to meet an officer. It is however, necessary that the representations

dropped in those boxes are examined daily and suitable action taken on them.

A Petition Register may be maintained in all public offices besides the registers which are normally maintained. The progress of disposal of the petitions may be recorded in such a register and these should be scrutinised at frequent intervals by the heads of offices and their subordinates.

4. Touring schedules of District Officers should be drawn up in advance and adhered to as far as possible so that persons could meet them in their camps without having to come to the Headquarters.

5. Heads of Offices should take with them on their camps petitions pending in the subordinate offices so that the progress of the latter and their disposal could be checked and verified on the spot.

6. Modern amenities such as electricity and telephones should be installed in public offices and greater use made of them in reaching decisions quickly. The feeling that all inter-office communications should be in writing must be discouraged.

7. Citizen's Advice Bureau :

It was felt that apart from official agencies for assisting citizens to obtain guidance in their dealings with public offices, a non-official Citizens' Advice Bureau should be set up to assist citizens in securing the necessary guidance. The Bureau should be financed by voluntary organisations and not by Government. The Government should recognise the bureau so that it can acquire the necessary status to obtain information from official sources regarding the procedures and the stages of the cases sought to be pursued. The bureau will also act as an agency for the dissemination of the information regarding Government procedures, etc. The experiment may be tried first in Metropolitan towns and extended to districts, if successful.

All departments dealing with the public should arrange for their officers and staff to be given adequate training in public relations and handling of enquiries and public grievances. The training should be short and not very expensive. This is especially required for officers of technical departments like the Medical and Engineering.

8. Confidential reports should contain an item 'Public Relations' to facilitate an assessment of the officer's capacity to deal with the public.

9. Representations should be dealt with purely on merits and not on the status of the person sponsoring the same. It was felt that legislators representing individual cases may be requested to meet the Collector or the highest officer available rather than the subordinate officers. They may also be requested to report only important matters or those of urgency.

10. Processing of Representations :

A reasonable time limit should be set for the disposal of petitions and the Heads of offices should ensure that these time limits are adhered to as far as possible. Investigations should be conducted by the Heads of offices in all important matters and even in routine cases a certain percentage of petitions should be looked into by them. This would enable them to keep a closer watch on the work of the subordinate officers and also to ensure that they perform their functions diligently.

An appellate authority should not go into the merits of the case under disposal, as it would fetter the discretion of the subordinate and deprive the party of one stage of remedy in appeal. He may however give directions about the expeditious disposal of such cases.

11. Decisions taken on representations should be communicated invariably to the applicant and in case of rejection adequate reasons must be given for the decision.

12. It was pointed out that in Rajasthan the officer dealing with public grievances had to handle a large number of Public Servants' representations which did not fall under his purview but which required urgent action. It was suggested that the institution of 'Administration Courts' such as now obtain in France may be considered for adoption in India also in view of the dissatisfaction of the Public Servants in these matters. This would reduce the burden on the Government machinery as well as on the judiciary and at the same time give prompt redress to their grievances.

It was felt that the Head of offices, and especially the Collector and the Chief Secretary, should give some time once a month to look into the complaints of Public Servants. However the matter does not strictly fall within the purview of this seminar.

13. Transmission of Petition :

The Working Group was of the opinion that the petition containing a grievance should be made to reach the decision-making level within the shortest possible time. Normally, persons making representations should be advised and encouraged to making representations at appropriate levels where the grievances can be straightaway redressed. However, if the grievance did initially go to a level lower or higher than the one at which decision has to be taken, the petition should be made to travel with the utmost expedition to the decision-making level. It was also considered that, in important cases when petitions are transmitted to lower or higher authorities for disposal, the parties should be informed that the petitions have been sent to a particular officer and they would hear from him.

14. Follow-up :

As regards follow up, it was considered that apart from the checks and balances prescribed in the various manuals, the officers should lay down a regular time-table for the disposal of most categories of grievances. With experience it should be possible to lay down a fairly accurate time-table for different classes and categories of representations. Thus, on receipt of a representation, it would be possible to inform the petitioner that it would take say, three months to dispose off his case. It was suggested that the petitioner should be told that in case he did not get a reply within this period, he could contact the officer concerned personally if he so felt like. This would result in restoring the confidence of the public in the efficacy of administrative procedures. It would also enable the officer to look into delays and take remedial measures. It was also pointed out that the actual volume of this work would have a bearing on the time taken for disposal as also the quality of the work. Suggestions were therefore made for increasing staff, etc.

15. On-the-spot disposal should be encouraged whenever possible and administratively appropriate.

16. Steps should be taken to ensure that Public Servants take initiative and are not punished for committing bonafide mistakes. Incentive awards like advance increments should be made liberally to those who display marked initiative in their public duties.

17. It was felt that while the machinery outlined in the previous paragraphs would cater to the needs of the public in expediting their cases pending with the Government, it would not provide real redress in genuine cases of grievance on merits. A suggestion was made that perhaps an institution like that of an 'Ombudsman' or 'Parliamentary Commissioner' should be considered at the State level to facilitate redress. If such an institution is created, however, necessary steps may also be taken to ensure that the display of initiative by Government officials which is essential for a development-oriented administration is not unduly fettered.

18. A separate institution of the State Director for Citizens' Grievances does not seem to be necessary. We recommend instead that the Secretaries to Government in a Secretariat Department and the head of the department in the attached and subordinate offices should be designated as the ex-officio grievance officer for that particular department with the functions as defined in the main body of the report.

The ex-officio grievance officer in a Secretariat Technical Department should be provided with the assistance, full-time if possible and part-time otherwise, of another departmental officer, who may be designated as the departmental Deputy Grievance Officer with the duties as defined in the main body of the report.

19. We recommend that the District Collector, Deputy Commissioner should be designated as the ex-officio Grievance officer at the District Level with the functions as defined in the main body of the report.

To enable the Collector to discharge his duties as District Grievance officer efficiently and effectively without detriment to his other functions, he should be provided with the assistance of (a full time officer if possible and part-time otherwise) of another officer who should be designated as the Assistant District Grievance Officer, with duties as defined in the main body of the report.

20. All applications should invariably be acknowledged under the signature of Section officer, Superintendent, Head Clerk or the P. A. to the Minister or officer concerned, except those belonging to certain categories mentioned in the main report.

Applications from Citizens should be allotted either of the two categories simple and complex and should be finally

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disposed of within the time limit indicated against each category in the Main Report.

An application should be treated as a file in itself on its diary number unless there are some compelling reasons to the contrary.

In order to reduce the halting time of papers at various levels, officers and staff should be required to process the case as completely as possible within three clear working days of their receipt.

The number of levels required to put up notes should be reduced and defined, keeping in view the principles enunciated in the main body of the report.

21. Prompt action should be taken on all cases and attempts at 'passing the buck' should be severely punished. If reports are to be called for, they should be done simultaneously from all concerned departments or offices, and *not* successively. If objections are to be raised they should be made altogether and not piecemeal.

22. Applications received by higher authorities by way of an endorsement should not be forwarded for report or for action where it is clear that its copy has already gone to the officer competent to take action. In other cases, the copy should simply be forwarded to such officer for necessary action under intimation to the applicant. Alongside this, it is necessary that serious view should be taken of officers who fail to exercise the delegated powers and responsibilities.

SUMMARY RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

The Inter-Branch Seminar of the Madras Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration was inaugurated by his Excellency the Governor of Madras, Sardar Ujjal Singh, in the Rajaji Hall, Madras, at 10 a.m. on Saturday the 21 December 1968.

Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan, President of the Madras Branch and Chief Secretary to Government, extended a very warm and hearty welcome to the Governor and the delegates. He expressed satisfaction that representatives from all the Southern States were able to attend the Seminar. Tracing the history of the Madras Branch, he referred to the State level Seminar held by the Branch in August 1968. As a result of the success achieved at this Seminar, the Branch had organized this Inter-Branch Seminar. The Branch had also increased its membership substantially and in the past one year, the membership had risen from 40 to 113. Among the members there were corporate bodies and private firms, apart from individuals. He expressed a hope that greater number of firms will become members of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, since the private sector had also a vital interest in public administration.

Of the total membership of 113 in the Branch, 68 were Government officers. Thiru Ramakrishnan expressed the hope that more number of officers, particularly those belonging to the Indian Administrative Service would join the Association. He was particularly glad to welcome the members of Service Associations who were present by invitation.

Referring to the subjects for the Seminar, he said that they had chosen as the main topic the question of assessment of performance in public services, since it was a matter of great and current interest. The non-gazetted Government Officers' Union had been agitating for quite some time past that the system of maintaining confidential records should be given up, because they felt that under that system a lot of injustice was being done and that caste, communal and personal prejudices often came into play. It was therefore, considered that the subject could be advantageously discussed with delegates of various other States and also the representatives of the private sector. If some measure could be devised by which the grievances of the public servants could be redressed, it would promote contentment among the services who would discharge their duties with greater devotion and ease. Thiru Ramakrishnan said that as Chief Secretary of the Madras Government, he was looking forward to the deli-

berations of this Seminar and he hoped that as a result of the conclusions reached, it would be possible for the Madras Government to take some decisions which would be of some satisfaction to the non-gazetted Government officers of the State.

Referring to the other subject, viz. redressal of public grievances, he pointed out that the subject had been discussed in considerable depth at the Seminar held in August, 1968 and that the results of the Seminar had been circulated to all the delegates. He hoped that suitable points for implementation would emerge from the discussions on these subjects.

Referring to the criticism against the conduct of such Seminars as merely talking shops, he pointed out that the Seminar should serve to focus public attention on subjects of great public interest and when the subjects were discussed by experienced professionals, useful conclusions were bound to emerge. Government officers would also be able to speak their minds freely and offer their personal opinions which would be put to test in the Working Groups and judged by people coming from different sectors, public and private. In the long run, such Seminars were bound to serve a good purpose.

Thiru Ramakrishnan thanked the Governor once again for having agreed to inaugurate the Seminar.

Inaugurating the Seminar His Excellency the Governor Sardar Ujjal Singh said :—
‘ Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to meet and greet the office-bearers and members of the Madras Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration and also to welcome in our midst representatives who have come to participate in this inter-Branch Seminar. As President of the Madras Regional Branch, I congratulate the Chairman, Shri C. A. Ramakrishnan and his colleagues on the energetic steps they have taken to revitalise this Branch.

The backdrop in which the Institute of Public Administration came into being is worth recapitulation because it was born with laudable objects. Anticipating the tasks awaiting the public administration in free India, Dean Paul Appleby suggested in 1953 the setting up of an Institute of Public Administration in India with a view to making a systematic study of public administration in view of the increasing complexity and expansion of governmental activity



The Governor Sardar Ujjal Singh, inaugurating the Seminar.

following transformation of a law and order State into a Welfare State. The Government of India accepted this suggestion and the Institute was inaugurated the next year. Five years later, the Madras Branch was organised.

Since the attainment of Freedom, the picture of India has been undergoing changes of vast magnitude. The implementation of three Five Year Plans and the holding of four General Elections, put the administrative machinery on trial. Considering the wide range and variety of governmental functions affecting the daily lives of millions of people, with all the stresses and strains that they involved, the administrative machinery has, by and large, acquitted and adjusted itself very well. Occasional or isolated cases of lapses cannot be generalized.

Consistent with the taking up of various development programmes at all levels—from village to national—during the last decade and a half, the responsibilities of the administration have increased, and the administrative set up has also registered enormous expansion. It is the duty of this Institute to study the working of the administration in every branch periodically, undertake research and offer suggestions for qualitative improvement. The Administrative Reforms Commission has also been giving its recommendations by instalments and perhaps it is too early to say what impact they will have on public administration.

There has been criticism of our Five Year Plans in some quarters. I do not think the fault lies with the formulation of plans, but perhaps there are defects in their implementation. There have been shortfalls in the achievement of physical targets in several sectors. Critics have attributed all this to administrative inefficiency. It must be said that well-gearred and enthusiastic administrative personnel in some States have certainly been able to make the plans a success. It is mainly at the administrative level that a Plan meets with failure or success.

This Seminar proposes to have a perspective discussion, in the light of Government and private sector procedures, on the methods of assessment of the performance of employees, followed by a discussion on redressal of public grievances—the subject considered by a Seminar conducted in August this year. I can quite visualise that as a result of these discussions on two different subjects, it will be possible for this Branch to frame certain definite ideas as to the best way of promoting the efficiency of employees, on the one hand, and how they can serve the public effectively and quickly, on the other.

I wish to point out to you that there is need for the administrative machinery to evolve methods and procedures to suit the needs of the times and the urgency of the occasion. It is well known that justice delayed is justice denied. Redressal of grievances should, therefore, be as quick as possible and the machinery employed for this purpose should be efficient. There must be a scientific and practical approach to the solution of all administrative problems. The base has stood the test of time, and only modernization of its methods is wanted.

Delay in dealing with files is the main source of corruption. Corruption and delays in dealing with cases generally go together. Both are inhibiting our economic and social progress. This question of avoiding delay in the disposal of cases must receive top priority at the hands of the Head of the Department or of a branch if we wish to purify our administration and achieve quick results. Apart from the grievances of the staff, the grievances of the public have also to be attended with promptness by officers with a sense of responsibility. People generally waste the time of Ministers, besides wasting their own time and money for small grievances which could be redressed at the district level or by the Head of the Department. Officers should not shirk responsibility in quick redressal of these grievances,

We have too many holidays and fewer hours of work than in the developed countries. We have to catch up with the advanced nations and we can only do so if we put in more hard work with zeal and a high sense of duty and patriotism. The senior and responsible officers should continue to keep personal contacts with the staff and inspire them with their own example.

I have seen some papers which are to be read at this Seminar on the methods of assessment of the performance of employees. At the present moment, personal files are maintained for all grades of officers and annual or half-yearly assessments are added on to those files. I know there has been some criticism that the officers' reports are at times very biased and therefore they do not reflect the correct position in regard to efficiency and conduct of the employee concerned. There is also a system of communicating adverse reports to the employees concerned and this leads to further appeals, protests etc. In the Defence Services, the personal files are open documents so far as the employees are concerned. I do not know whether such a system will be found administratively feasible in civil administration.

It will certainly be very unfortunate if an officer's report is not objective, but on the other hand, tends to become a biased one on account of the officer being influenced by communal, caste or other considerations. In any case, at the time of promotion, I think all the reports made by successive officers on the person concerned are taken into consideration for the assessment of the individual's work and conduct.

Employers including the Government will probably insist on keeping these personal files as an administrative practice to keep up efficiency in services. Employees are a little critical and probably some of them may want this system to be scrapped. But nothing should be done to alter the present practice which will affect the efficiency of the services and eventually, of the administration. This subject will have to be critically gone into discussed and debated and a final decision taken which will meet the present requirements of the administrative set up. I should like to emphasise that these reports should always be objective and should never be biased or influenced by extraneous factors.

At the present time, as a farmer myself, I see a revolution taking place on our agricultural front, with emphasis on increased production, propagation of high-yielding varieties, timely supply of inputs and advancement of loans to agriculturists, etc. The administration has to deal with this on a war-footing if we want quick results. I feel that in such a situation, procedural bottlenecks, duplication of work and routine delays should be totally avoided. Agriculture, Co-operation and Family Planning are really people's movements. Co-operative movement has a great future if only it is strengthened in rural areas, because it serves as the agency for giving credit facilities and distributing fertilizers to farmers. In certain departments which have a direct contact with the people, the employees must be given special in-door training by specialists and they must be helped to give better performance. Then alone there can be proper understanding between the field staff and the administrative staff. The rules of procedure also need simplification.

In the changed and changing times, statistics play a vital part in the formulation of policies. Foreign countries study our efforts and achievements in our development programmes from the statistical standards they have evolved for themselves. Various data have to be collected in a scientific way and processed from time to time to give a clear picture of the functioning of every department. I am glad that our shortcomings in this branch are realised, and that it is proposed to take up specific schemes for implementation in the Fourth Plan.

This occasion necessitates a reference to the role of the administration in the years to come. What Sir V. T. Krishnamachari—one of the famous administrators of India who had much to do with this Institute—said nine years ago, cannot lose its validity or importance to-day or at any time. Here are his inspiring words — —

'The nation is committed irrevocably to policies and programmes for large-scale social and economic development aimed at bringing about a rapid rise in standards of living and largest measure of social justice attainable. For the success of these, nothing is more vital than that there should be administrations in the Centre and the States consisting of men and women with a sense of mission, efficient in their spheres of work, living with the people and in close contact with their problems, and assisting them in their efforts for a fuller life'.

Thanking you very much."

Speaking after the inauguration, Thiru P. A. Menon, I.C.S. (Retd.), a Vice President of the Branch, pointed out that in both subjects which the Seminar was discussing it was the human element that was the most important. This would include not only the permanent Civil Servants but also the Ministers and the public as a whole. He also stressed the need for adequate remuneration to public servants so that they could discharge their duties with contentment and without fear or favour. Ultimately the responsibility for redressing public grievances rested squarely at the very top i.e. the Government. In a democracy, the standards of public administration necessarily depended on the elected political leaders. Standards of probity, impartiality and ability to decide problems without political considerations and the ability to let the permanent Civil Servants carry on the execution of the policies without interference—all these qualities should be looked for in our political leaders—qualities which would lead to sound judgement, decisive, courageous and precise action in line with their conclusions.

Speaking next, Thiru K. N. Anantaraman, Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Regional Branch said it was heartening that the Delegates to the Seminar came not only from the public services but from Universities, Services Associations and big business firms. He traced the history of administration in various countries. He felt that Thiru Ramakrishnan had been a little too modest in assessing the value of such Seminars. When a large number of people who had experience of administration in various fields and people from other walks of life came together and applied their minds on important subjects, a number of ideas were bound to emerge.

Requesting Prof. Jagannatham to speak next, Thiru. Rama-krishnan announced the generous grant of Rs. 5,000/-made by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi, for the conduct of the Seminar.

Prof. Jagannatham. Director-in-charge of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, in the absence of Dr. J. N. Khosla, then addressed the Seminar. He referred in particular to the various activities of the Institute. It had more than 10 publications to its credit and it conducted 25 studies on behalf of the Administrative Reforms Commission. It had also organized various Seminars and Conferences and had been constantly keeping in its mind the need for analysing and studying problems in the field of public administration. Speaking of the subjects for the Seminar, he said that they could be summarised under two heads viz. (a) the employer-employee grievances and (b) the citizen's grievances.

The employer has grievances against the employee for inefficient performance. The employee has grievances against the employer for not giving him adequate remuneration or for not giving him proper working conditions. The first topic of assessment of performance of the employees referred to the employer-employee relationship. The second was the study of public grievances. In a democracy, the citizen-administrator relationship was of outstanding importance and the Indian Institute of Public Administration had conducted a study on the machinery and procedure for the redressal of citizens' grievances and submitted a report to the Administrative Reforms Commission. Based on that, the Administrative Reforms Commission had drawn up its interim report on the "Redressal of citizens, grievances" and they had recommended the need for the establishment of a machinery called the Lokpal. Professor Jagannatham hoped that the conclusions of the Indian Institute of Public Administration study would also be discussed by the Seminar.

Thiru K. Venkataraman, Secretary of the Regional Branch, proposed a grateful vote of thanks to the Governor and to all the invitees.

II

The Seminar then divided itself into Working Groups. It re-assembled for the plenary session at 10-05 a.m. on 23-12-1968.

The Report of the Working Group III dealing with the 'Redressal of Public Grievances' was taken up first. Prof.

Jagannatham presided over the discussion. He pointed out that the whole problem of public grievances had to be approached from two stand points. One stand-point was the understanding of the paramount necessity to satisfy the citizens' legitimate aspirations and if there are grievances arising from the legitimate aspirations, to redress them. But this had to be also considered in the light of another paramount necessity, namely the accountability of the Administration for the action that they take. These two countervailing considerations had to be borne in mind in dealing with public grievances. From the point of view of administration, there was a two fold problem, one dealing with the public and the other with the management inside the Government. Of these, the Working Group had emphasized the question of reorientation in the approach to the public. It was for this reason that they had recommended that there should be a voluntary organization called the Citizens' Advisory Bureau. There was a certain amount of ambitious approach among the citizens for things to be done by the Government but which the Government could not do. The Government had their own limitations but the citizens were not probably aware of them or if they were aware, they were overlooking them. Too much dependence on the Government and too much expectation had to be brought down to the level of realities. The Citizens' Advisory Bureau could operate as a convenient link between the citizens and the Government in mutual education, mutual appreciation and mutual understanding. Without that kind of mutual understanding, no democratic Government could successfully function.

The other aspect of the problem was how to improve the methods and procedures in the Government. There was a need for a comprehensive review and not for a "slip pasting" or, and *ad hoc* approach. There was need for a review of procedure and for trust in the place of distrust. In other words, there was a need for building up a system of development in administration. He then requested Thiru Anantharaman to present the salient points of the Working Group.

Thiru Anantharaman explained in detail the recommendations made by Working Group III. There was a broad agreement among the views of various persons as to the measures to be taken to improve the system of redressal of public grievances but the degree of emphasis naturally varied. One subject on which there was considerable discussion was the disposal of anonymous and pseudonymous petitions. His view was that the officer who received them should exercise his discretion and see if it was *prima-facie* frivolous and if so, consign it straightaway to the waste paper basket. But some time, some

of these anonymous petitions also give a clue to the discovery of large scale corruption. What mattered was that any inquiry whether preliminary or regular should be done with care and discretion and the prestige of the officer concerned should not be unnecessarily damaged.

Thiru Anantharaman stressed that an officer should be freely accessible to the public and on special days, even without prior appointment. He should also give advance information about his availability at Head Quarters and on tour. He also drew the attention of the Seminar to the recommendation that there should be a short course on public relations. Of course, details of such a course would have to be worked out by the Departments concerned because the need differed from one Department to another. The Working Group recommended only a short course since it did not want to make recommendations that would involve the Government in considerable extra expenditure.

Referring to the recommendation of the Working Group that a Citizens' Advisory Bureau consisting of respectable and responsible non-officials should be organised, he emphasized that it should not be a Bureau organised by the Government but should be a voluntary organisation to which Government may accord recognition. The Working Group had also considered the question of creating a separate institution called the State Director for Citizens' Grievances, but even if such a machinery is created they have naturally to consult the Department concerned for the disposal of grievances. The Working Group had therefore suggested that the Secretaries in the Secretariat Departments and Heads of Departments in the attached and subordinate offices should be designated as the Ex-Officio Grievance officers for their respective charges. He also emphasized the need for nominating a specific officer for grievance purposes, since otherwise no body would feel the responsibility.

After Thiru Anantharaman had explained the recommendations of the Working Group, Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan suggested that the Seminar might at the conclusion of the discussion on the Report of this Group, pass a resolution to the effect that the Report when finalized should be sent to the Chief Secretaries of the Governments in the Regions covered in the Seminar, requesting that appropriate action might be taken on these recommendations. As something concrete should emerge from the labour of the Seminar in which persons of experience and competence had participated, this step could be taken straightaway.

Speaking next, Thiru S. Ramachandran, M.L.A., wondered what exactly was the purpose that would be served by the Citizens' Advisory Bureau. The functions of such a Bureau were now equally shared by non-officials. In most cases decisions would not be taken on the spot and consultation with subordinate officers would be necessary. In such circumstances, how far the Bureau would be useful was a matter to be considered.

Proceeding he pointed out that there was a general feeling that much importance was not given by the Government to representations made by non-officials. It was because of this that non-officials also tended, in course of time, to make representations which were irresponsible. If representations made by non-officials were given due consideration, frivolous representations would be largely avoided.

Thiru Ramachandran also pointed out that there should be no fettering of the appellate authority's discretion to go into the merits of a case, merely because a subordinate authority is competent to take a decision or has already taken it. Even now non-officials do not always come up with a complaint against subordinate officials because of the fear that when they want to approach them later for some favour or other, they may be penalized. In such circumstances there should be no curb on the public expressing their frank views and the appellate authority hearing them.

Thiru Ramachandran pointed out that he himself had been in Government service and that too much importance to petitions from public will also lead to confusion. There must be an "Optimum level" in attending to the petitions. At the same time unless the Administration decides things on merits and hears the representations of the public, we cannot create confidence among the public that the Government attends to the needs of the people.

Thiru R. M. Seshadri pointed out that the greater part of the Report of the Working Group III was mechanical. It was necessary to go to the pith of the Report. He agreed with the criticism that the Citizens' Advisory Bureau was an ineffective remedy but we had to make a start. Apart from the Bureau, we could draw upon the experience on the French System of Administration also. In the system of the French Tribunals, it was possible for a man having a grievance to represent to the Tribunal and the Tribunal could give a decision after hearing the official side. A tribunal of such a nature was necessary to deal with public grievances.

Referring to the suggestion about the Ombudsman, he pointed out that there was no need for the fear of the officers that they might not be able to function properly under such a set up. The functions of the Ombudsman were not always correctly understood. He suggested that the State Governments concerned or the Seminar itself should constitute a small committee to examine the feasibility of having an Ombudsman or an Administrative Court to deal with public grievances.

Thiru R. R. Dalvai pointed out that it was necessary to take up a specific Department of Government and find out how far its procedures and rules affected the public because it was such procedures and rules that caused most of the grievances. Officers also shirked taking decisions and this should be avoided. Instead of having Public Relation Officers, we should have Grievance Follow-up Officers, but men will have to be carefully selected for this purpose. Officers should be enjoined to dispose of files quickly and across the table. The public should be prohibited from meeting the subordinate staff but should be asked to see the officers.

Speaking next, Thiru Lal pointed out that it was the human element in any organisation which would spell success or failure. Systems and procedures were only as good as the people involved were in the implementation thereof. The real problem was one of attitude and it was the key to the efficient performance of any function. There must be a conviction on the part of officials that good public relations are important and we should see to it that officials are given all the assistance to develop human relations.

Thiru Parthasarathy Iyengar endorsed the suggestion of Thiru Seshadri that a small committee might be formed to examine the feasibility of having an Ombudsman or an Administrative Tribunal to look into public grievances. The real difficulty, arose not because of lack of instructions but because civil servants were no longer able to stand against the pressures of varying descriptions. It was necessary that there should be a Code of Character for the public servants and the legislators, particularly the members of the party in power.

As regards the Citizens' Advisory Bureau, it should not be tied up to any party. There should be the best of persons in whom the public would have trust. There should be no objection to Government financing such a Bureau since all voluntary organisations in our country get grants from Government. He also stressed the need for the proper training of officers.

Speaking next, Dr. Chandra pointed out that legislators themselves were functioning quite effectively as Grievance Officers and there was hardly any necessity for creating another institution like the Citizens' Advisory Bureau. This would only delay and prolong the period of redressal of grievances. Dr. Chandra asked what kind of composition was envisaged for the Bureau, in the adverse political atmosphere prevalent now?

Prof. Jagannatham clarified that the Bureau would not be a case of just adding another agency, nor of supplementing the work done by legislators. It was only an advisory agency and not a redressal agency. It was necessary because the general public were not aware of many of the procedures. There were still many grievances unattended particularly in towns.

Thiru A. Padmanabhan pointed out that if the intention of creating a Bureau was to advise and guide the citizens as to whom they should approach and for what they should ask, the role of the Advisory Bureau would be served. But if one expected too much from the Bureau that this would solve all the problems of the public, it was not going to be achieved.

Thiru Padmanabhan pleaded for a bold and imaginative approach in dealing with anonymous petitions. The Head of the Office should have the discretion to decide then and there whether such a petition was frivolous or not. Whether it was a preliminary or a regular enquiry, it was in the nature of things that the prestige of the officer was affected and it took several years for him to build his reputation again.

According to him, the Seminar should attempt to identify the various contact points and see whether there was appropriate delegation of powers or freedom for the functionaries to take decisions. It was not sufficient to merely create more and more institutions without identifying the contact points.

Speaking next, Thiru Vezhavendan wanted the opening of the reception counters to be extended to lower levels like the divisional and taluk levels. In Chingleput District a three-point programme of redressal had been introduced and it was very successful. As regards acknowledgement of petitions, he suggested that the acknowledgement should contain information about the probable date by which the grievances could be redressed. Such information could also be communicated to the concerned representatives of the people so that the latter could convince the petitioners that their grievances would be redressed by a particular date.

As regards the creation of a non-official Advisory Bureau, he doubted the usefulness of such an agency. The various types of non-officials such as the Panchayat Union Chairman, M. L. A., M. L. C., and M. P. had occasion to meet officials at various times, as in the District Development Council meetings. These non-officials should be able to convey the grievances of the public and have them redressed.

Thiru Vezhavendan pointed out that as representatives of the people, they were hard pressed by the public to represent their grievances. What was important was that some convincing reason should be given to people's representatives so that they could convey it to the petitioners. Frequent complaint could then be avoided. His suggestion was, therefore, that the stages of examination of a petition should be communicated to the representatives through whom the petition was presented.

Thiru C. V. Munuswamy pointed out that we had reached a stage when a public grievance was the grievance of all. He said that the true role of information and publicity officers could be achieved if they were utilised for ventilating the grievances of public or if they were put in charge of the Advisory Bureau. According to him, the holding of block level or village level conferences to redress public grievances could be useful. As regards the criticism that one often heard that the standard of Government officials had fallen, he pointed out that taking into account the time in which we are living, and the demands on the administration it should be assumed that our standard is good.

Thiru Munuswamy pointed out that the administration often forgot the grievances of the Government servants, particularly the non-gazetted officers. There was a pitiable delay in regard to confirmation, regularisation and sanctioning of increments. Some of the offices were located in very bad buildings. Many Government servants did not have enough scope for promotional opportunities. The grievances of the Government servants should, therefore, be redressed.

Thiru V. Ramamurthy pointed out that one aspect of the problem that had not been stressed so far was that a good number of grievances could arise because of insufficient appreciation or knowledge of the Government policy and procedures. If officers disseminated information about the nature of the procedure in particular cases and the time taken to reach decisions, it might be possible to cut down the number of grievances coming up.

Commenting on the various points made during the discussion, Thiru Anantaraman, Chairman of the Working Group III, pointed out that due to the nature of the subject, it was not possible to discuss everything in Working Group. As regards the role of legislators, personally speaking, he had not only been helped a lot by the MLAs in implementation of certain policies of the Government but also in utilising their local influence for constructive purposes, specially in cases of drought, etc. There had been a sort of convention that whenever there were two parties to a grievance, no MLA would concern himself with it since he thought it was partly judicial. It was of course a convention. Conditions differed from place to place and it would be difficult for the Seminar to make any definite recommendations in this regard. So was the case with the Citizens' Advisory Bureau. It might be possible to work it in places where people were enlightened. As regards the suggestions relating to the Ombudsman and the French system of the administrative tribunals, these subjects had to be studied in detail. Thiru Anantaraman agreed with the points made that procedural delays should be avoided and that the human element should be taken care of by adequate training. He pointed out that the publicity department could not be an agency for taking up public grievances, as its main function was to publicise the beneficial activities of the Government. He was of the view that while anonymous petitions were, by and large, sent to the waste paper basket, some of them did need to be taken note of and it was possible to ensure that the prestige of the officers was not damaged, by making discreet enquiries.

Prof. Jagannatham suggested certain amendments to the report of the Working Group III. He welcomed the suggestion to have a separate seminar on the Ombudsman. He congratulated the Regional Branch on organising this inter-branch seminar in a successful manner. Widening of the participation by inclusion of representatives of services associations and others was particularly to be welcomed.

III

The Seminar then proceeded to consider the subject of methods of assessment of employees. Thiru Ramakrishnan suggested that the reports of the Working Groups I and II might be combined and considered together. He requested Prof. K. N. V. Sastri, Chairman of Working Group I to preside over the discussion.

Prof. Sastri said that they had very systematic discussion in the Working Group I and all points of view were considered with a sense of responsibility and pragmatism. They found that there was a very wide gap between the science and the art of Government. The principles of science of Government did not help us very much in assessing the competence of the employees of the Government. This was a very difficult task involving knowledge of psychology. Between Madras and Mysore States there was not much of a difference except in small matters like appeal and the way in which the appeal was considered. But between other states of South India and Kerala, there was a wide difference. Kerala had recently passed some orders on this question and they had to wait for some time and see what the results were.

The greatest difficulty arose at the lowest level. There was not much difference of opinion regarding the level where merit and seniority were both to be considered. It was only where seniority alone had to be taken into consideration that difficulties arose.

Speaking next, Thiru Madhava Menon, Chairman of Working Group II, pointed out that his Group dealt with an allied subject. Their basic approach was that the success of any organisation depended on the success and quality of the men who manned it. So whatever was done in an organisation, training, confidential reporting etc., should be aimed at the improvement of the persons who constituted that organisation. They were not able to go into details regarding the forms of reports etc. since they had considered Government organisations as well as private and public sector organisations. No single prescription would be suitable for them all. They, therefore, confined themselves to analysis of general principles which should inspire the formulation of reporting procedures. Another aspect which the Working Group stressed was the necessity for training for the reporters themselves. The Working Group had suggested that graphic rating would probably be a more appropriate method of rating the performance of the employees. They had also made special recommendations which would be necessary in the case of Government servants.

Speaking next, Thiru G. Swaminathan pointed out that Working Group-II had raised the basic point as to the purpose for which the performance appraisals are made. In the case of private sector industries, the objective was clear, namely making profits and to put it boldly making the maximum profits. In the case of a public sector industry, it was expected to make only a reasonable profit. The objective was, therefore,

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not equally clear for the public sector industries. He stressed that it was nevertheless necessary that the objective of the organisation should be made clear.

There was some difference in approach between working Group I and Working Group II. In Working Group II, they felt that quantitative and qualitative evalution of work had to be done. Such a combined evaluation could be made for lower division and upper division clerks also. The question had been raised that if no incentive was given to the personnel by way of promotion or by way of increments, was the appraisal or assessment of performance necessary? In his view, it was necessary to pull up persons who did not come up to par. Working Group II had also stressed that the reporting officer should be given training in the techniques of evalution. Working Group II had considered that it was sufficient that the appraisal made by one officer should be reviewed by his immediate superior. In Group I they had suggested provision for referring to yet another superior officer. His own feeling was that one reviewing officer would be enough.

Thiru Stracey pointed out that the objective of the system should be that the person reported on should be enabled to make the maximum contribution to the organisation. There was no mention in the Working Group Reports of the need for timely counselling. An opportunity should be given to the employee to correct himself, and forth is purpose, he should be counselled. He stressed the need for ensuring that medicore officers did not come up to the top, for that was what did most of the damage. Lastly, there was the question of reputation. The problem was, how far we should bring in reputation, good or bad, into the officer's character roll for the purpose of real assessment.

Referring to this concept of reputation, Thiru A. Mukerjee felt that if once a certain officer had not got the reputation he would not deliver the goods so far as grievances were concerned. People would not have faith in him. If a person is known to have a bad reputation and his colleagues and others say that he is not the right type of person, it should be recorded and whether it could be proved or not, it was better to err on the safe side and not give him promotion because one bad man at the top would spoil the whole organisation. Granted that the objective of an organisation should be to see that every man in his job was doing his best, counselling was necessary. But there are many factors which came into play when a man's performance was not the best. He might not like the very man who was counselling him. This should be taken note of.

Thiru Narayanan Nair, pointed out that the appraisal should not only be used for the purpose of promotion, but also to find out the weaknesses and to correct a person. When the weaknesses had to be corrected, the appraisal had to be open. Only this would ensure that every person is enabled to give of his best.

Speaking next, Col. Reddy said that the impression had got round that they had an open system of assessment in the army and that there was something different from what was obtaining in Central Government organisations. This was not correct. The army system was, more or less, the same as it was in the other departments. In the case of non-commissioned officers, the individual was told carefully what his shortcomings were; in the case of others, they had two columns in the confidential reports—one was descriptive regarding professional and personal qualities, the other was with regard to recommendations which commented on his eligibility for promotion or suitability for various classes of appointment. In the case of the army, the officer was responsible to train the individual, whether he was a soldier or a clerk. Therefore, he is expected periodically to send for the man to point out his mistakes and take the responsibility to see that he overcomes his weaknesses. If an adverse point persisted then a report had to be initiated on the person and either he was removed or sent to some other unit.

Thiru A. K. Narasimhamurthy pointed out that there was one section in Working Group I which felt that the annual assessment report was necessary at all levels; otherwise even the mediocre would come in on the basis of seniority-cum-merit. An award of punishment was something different from an adverse remark.

It was necessary that some guidelines were given to the assessing officers and for this different types of forms had to be evolved. So far as the objectives were concerned, they were generally known and the lack of information because of non-spelling out of objectives had not so far come in the way of any body doing his work efficiently.

Thiru Kunhunni Menon pointed out that because the system had been abused by some people it did not go to show that the system was in itself bad. His view, was that the system should continue but not necessarily in its present form. The system required a capacity on the part of the leader or the man at the top to really evaluate a person's working. It also

required trust. The report must be an open report. There must be mutual understanding between the employer and the employee and more give and take. We cannot expect the Administration to thrive and succeed unless it worked on trust and put trust in its officials. A person must know where he stands actually. The confidential file should not be a weapon of harassment but a weapon of creation. The person who wrote the confidential report of a man must have the relationship of a doctor to the patient. The purpose of calling a doctor is not to aggravate the situation but only to cure the disease and improve the health.

Prof. Sastri asked whether the Speaker specifically recommended the Kerala system or not for adoption in other States?

Thiru Menon said that he did really recommend it for the simple reason that at a particular lower level there was no need for such an appraisal. The appraisal was necessary when one took a person for supervisory position and control but it was not necessary for a typist or a clerk or an attendant, as the large mass of non-gazetted officers did not do any thing except carrying out some body's instructions.

Thiru Dalavai said that as a voter and tax-payer, he was interested in an efficient and good Government. Merit evaluation was necessary for the purpose of promotion. It was a wrong impression to entertain that it was the Britisher or the imperialist, who imposed this system. One could find such a system in a much more rigid form in America and other civilized countries. He pointed out that the suggestion that the reports should be open would lead to a chain of action and reaction. He pleaded that we should not create disharmony in offices by throwing the reports open. It was not that the system was bad but the unwillingness on the part of reporting officers to gather the strength of mind and do the work properly that created all the trouble. If the reports were not properly written, we should evolve methods to improve the persons reporting. Much also depended on the capacity of the officer incharge of promotions to judge the reports. There should be a Promotion Board to look after promotions which should not be department wise but should be pooled together. The Promotion Board can also communicate adverse remarks to the subordinates, get the replies and decide promotion cases on merits. Thiru Dalavai concluded by saying that it was preferable not to have the system at all rather than make it open and render it ineffective and inefficient.

Thiru K. N. Anantaraman pointed out that there was need to take into account the question of aptitude in performance assessment. He was not sure that there was no necessity for maintaining confidential reports for lower and upper division clerks. A good number of them rose in the districts, to positions of Tahsildars, Deputy Collectors and even Collectors.

Thiru Thiagarajan, on behalf of the non-gazetted Government Officers' Union thanked the chairman for the opportunity given to the Union to participate in the Seminar. The aim of 1½ lakhs of N.G.G.Os was to get the personal file abolished. Whether the personal file system should be confidential or open was a matter which concerned gazetted officers. So far as they, the N.G.G.Os were concerned, there was no need at all for the personal file itself. Clerks and Assistants played very little part in public administration. The integrity and success of administration depended on leadership and if the leadership was good, the staff in lower rungs would prove to be good and the administration efficient. Reporting and selection were necessary only for leadership and not for clerkship. For appointment of clerks certain qualifications had been prescribed and the M. P. S. C. recruited them. Decisions were taken at the leadership level and at the lower level, there was no scope for assessment of work.

Thiru Kumaravelu, Additional Director of Health Service pointed out that so far as the Medical Department was concerned, there was a large cadre of medical officers, nearly 3000 in number. It was obvious that a clear assessment of the work of the technical officers had to be carefully done, particularly as the cadre was very large. Referring to the army system, he mentioned that there was a system of "mention in despatches" in the army, which deserved to be employed in civil services also to take note of good work done.

Thiru S. Ramachandran, M. L. A., said that the pre-condition for effective performance from the employees was that the system should be based on mutual confidence. The present system was neither necessary nor useful and had to be replaced by an open file system. There was no need for fear that the open system would create bad blood. At the lower levels, the assessment report would not achieve anything. Trying to replace the confidential files by an assessment system would be

pointless since it would create once again the distrust between the officers and his subordinates.

At this stage, Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan asked whether it was not the case that lower division clerks in the districts were dealing with subjects instead of doing mere mechanical and routine work.

Thiru Gopalakrishnan, on behalf of the N. G. G. Os' Union, pointed out that the promotion of a lower division clerk to the post of upper division clerk was done only after he had passed some tests. There was no need for a personal file also to decide on promotion.

Thiru Ramakrishnan mentioned that the proportion of lower division clerks to assistants was 3 : 1 and hence selection became necessary.

Thiru A. Padmanabhan agreed that there was need for assessment for lower division clerks also, as not all could get promoted. The only question was whether we needed a cumbersome and elongated procedure. It would not be scientific or wise to go by "reputation", as suggested by Thiru Stracey.

Thiru Chakravarti suggested that instead of scrapping personal files altogether, we should first study specific cases in order to assess the role played by them in the promotion or selection of low paid Government employees. For gazetted posts the need for personal files was obvious. The report of the Working Group I had suggested three tiers of review and revision. In his view, this was not necessary. It would be enough if apart from the report of the assessee on himself, there was one report by the immediate superior and another by the reviewing officer. He also suggested that a cell could be created in the States participating in the seminar to consider the implementation of recommendations made in the Seminar.

Thiru C. V. Munuswamy, President of the Secretariat Association, pointed out that the personal file had become an engine of oppression and a source of profit as well. Those subordinates, who were capable of supplies and services to their superior officers, got a good chit rather than those who were deserving but were incapable of such acts. He had

suggested in his paper that the personal file should be substituted by a better method. One could work on the lines of Whitley Council of the United Kingdom and the Departmental Promotion Board of the Central Government. For purpose of promotion the personal file should give place to a well-brought out assessment record. In the United States, they had three major methods of assessment, namely, the merit rating system, the graphic rating system and the personality rating system. The graphic rating system could be adopted in Madras State. In a welfare State, the Government servants should feel safe and secure and should not be made scapegoats of arbitrary action and personal opinions. He suggested that the open system based on an improvement assessment practice should be adopted.

At this stage, Thiru Ramakrishnan pointed out that in the Central Government, the representatives of the unions were not included in the Promotion Boards.

Speaking next, Dr. Chandra pointed out that the object of appraisal did not finish with the possibility or otherwise of a promotion. Whether it was the Government or the private sector, it was a solemn duty of the employer to develop the employee. There can be no reason to disagree with the suggestion that the report should be shown to the employee. But what was needed was follow-up so that the employee could develop himself.

Thiru V. Ramamurthy said, that if we considered an organisation not as a static thing but as a process in evolution, it was all the more necessary to have a performance assessment. The objects of the administration have changed from a police and revenue collecting nature to that of a welfare state, and with that the requirements of organisation in terms of personnel, their motivations, etc. had also changed. Besides, the human aspect of the problem can neither be overlooked nor avoided. Human beings are capable of development and hence assessment was an essential part of running the organisation. The human element in assessment could not be completely eliminated. Already a number of useful suggestions had been made how this could be done.

Another aspect of the problem was that frustration was an inherent part of any organisation based on hierarchy. We should seek to find out the methods adopted in the private sector and elsewhere to remove this element of frustration.

There must be a more effective and more purposeful personnel administration on a specialised basis.

Dr. Bawa pointed out that in any system of assessment, irrespective of the best that an officer may be capable at that point of time, the special qualities and qualifications of the officer for other particular jobs, should be given greater emphasis. There would be no harm in having the portions of the confidential report covering points like efficiency, open and another portion covering points like reputation, confidential. Morale was another important factor which should be preserved. He did not see the point in attaching great importance to hierarchical differences, as for example, between the gazetted officers and the non-gazetted officers.

Thiru Parthasarathy Ayyangar said that the first thing to consider was the public interest. By and large, it was found in the operation of personal file system, that those who were considered by a number of people to be good had been promoted and those who had been considered by a number of people as bad, had not been promoted. Winston Churchill said, "Democracy is bad; but we have done nothing better". Examinations were bad but we had done nothing better. The same thing was about the personal files. The defects arose because the orders issued on the subject had not been adhered. All adverse entries should be based on specific instances. The suggestion that the employee may also furnish a report about himself was not a satisfactory one, since everyone will write a lot and tell a big story about himself.

Thiru N. Mungesa Mudaliar said that the main thing was that the reporting officer should do his job properly. He should remember that his reports will be perused by others at different points of time. He should, therefore, write his report as if it was a judgement which could stand scrutiny by any person. He should write it with a sense of justice. Irrespective of possible individual instances of occasional rude behaviour on the part of subordinate, the reporting officer should not lose his balance but must take an overall view and write a fair report.

It was equally essential that the scrutinising officer did his job very carefully. He should also see that adverse entries were communicated. The system would be useless without guidance. At the same time, if it was abolished, dangers were very serious.

IV

Beginning the concluding session of the Seminar, Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan welcomed Hon'ble Justice K. Veeraswami Judge of the Madras High Court and recounted the proceedings of the Seminar, the manner in which it has been organised and the reports submitted by the Working Groups. At his request, the Chairman of the two Working Groups, Thiru K. Anantaraman and Prof. K. N. V. Sastri spoke summarising the reports of the Working Groups and the subsequent deliberations, so that Hon'ble Justice K. Veeraswami could formulate his own observations on the basis of what had discussed.

The Hon'ble Justice K. Veeraswami expressed his sense of happiness in associating himself with the deliberations and prefaced his observations by saying that whatever views he might express, were personal to him and should not be considered binding on him if he were persuaded to take a contrary view later. In considering the question of the necessity for personal files, they should keep in view a three fold aspect. The personal file involved first the employee, next the administration and then the employer. Taking the employer first there was the familiar doctrine of Crown's pleasure when there was British rule in the country. This had undergone some change since 1919 and now the pleasure of the President or the Governor was qualified by the provisions of the Constitution of and the several statutes. Public interest cannot be ignored and the administration of the Government was not a profit making nature. This aspect of the matter should also be kept in mind.

Taking the employee, he pointed out that the employee looks for his salary as a sort of *quid pro quo* but he has also expectations of promotion. From the stand point of administration, merit was essential. Though seniority was the primary consideration in promotion, it should be qualified by merit. Merit was not a constant commodity in concept, content and circumstances. The changing nature of the concept in different departments and different types of work would have to be borne in mind. Efficiency, discipline and character were necessary as basic factors of public interest and the conclusions on an employee's promotion should also be decided on the touchstone of these important factors.

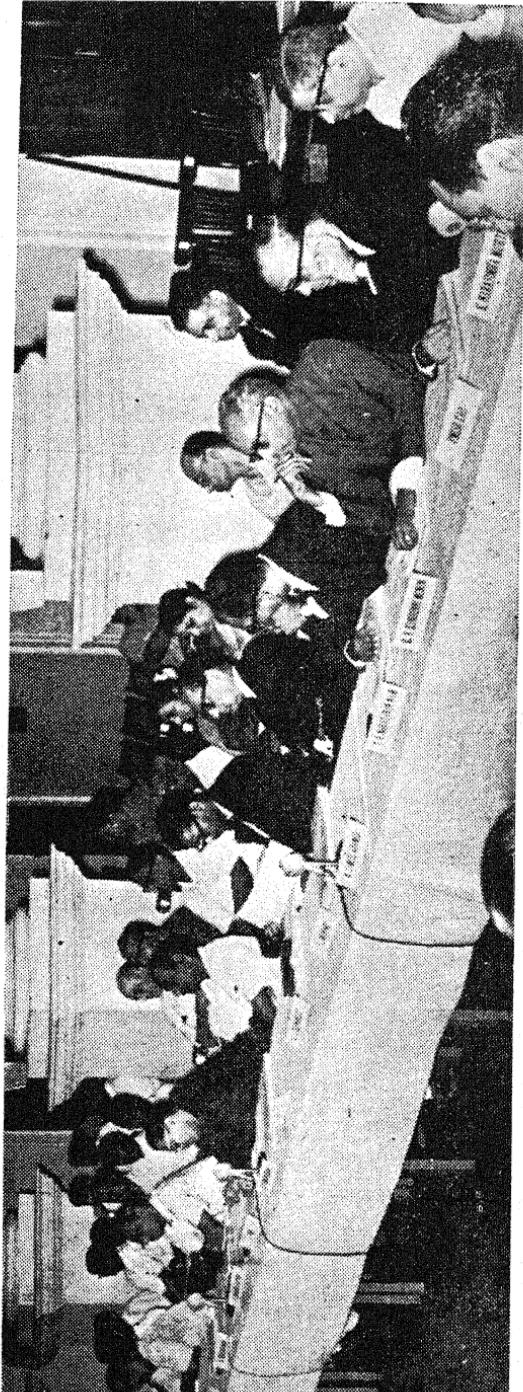
The main question that seemed to have loomed large in the discussions was whether the personal files should be maintained at all. In his personal view, there was no other way. It was inevitable that it had to be maintained as long as we had a hierarchy of employees from the lowest to the topmost. In an employment of this magnitude, it was difficult to have personal contact. He had been thinking about the problems since the morning and he had not been able to find any alternative, if personal files were to be abolished. There was this system in some form or other all the world over.

Whether the personal file should be confidential or open was indeed an intriguing question, but here again the three-fold aspect he had mentioned should be kept in view. If one looked at it from the point of view of the employee alone the argument would be persuasive that it should be kept open; if one looked at it from the point of view of the requirements of public administration, it should be confidential. As for the employers stand point, certain distressing features may come to force, if it was kept open. When all these aspects were combined, everything seemed to converge towards the conclusion that there should be confidence about the files.

The personal element in assessment could not be avoided and the personal factors could not be argument against confidential files. Bias will undoubtedly be there and bias will vitiate everything. But only when it was noticed could one rise up against this. The presumption was that a person who was placed in the position of assessing the merits of another, would be reasonable, just and fair. The question of bias seemed to the speaker to be a little exaggerated.

The other side of picture was, what happened if the system was open. Then, how were we going to achieve efficiency and discipline? It may, however, be possible to keep the personal files partly confidential and partly open but it was not an easy matter where to draw the line. In any event, we should never forget the public interest which is involved in the assessment of persons in the improvement of the Government. The dividing line between a partly confidential and partly open system should be the result of a careful, practical and wise balancing of the two factors of public and private interest.

Coming to the subject of public grievances, he referred to the large number of anonymous petitions that were received and pointed out that we should put a little more courage into our officers to act for themselves. Unless it was ensured that



Delegates to the Seminar.

the officer knew he was free to act according to his own conscience, no administration could be efficient. The proper place for the anonymous petitions was below the table.

A separate section should be established in each department to serve as a collecting and clearing agency in regard to public grievances.

Reverting to the question of personal files, the Judge pointed out that so far as attenders were concerned, it was not very much worthwhile to keep personal files. But so far as lower and upper division clerks were concerned, so long as promotions and selections were there, he did not see how one could avoid it.

Thiru K. M. Anantaraman on behalf of the visiting delegates, thanked the Chairman of the Madras Regional Branch, **Thiru C. A. Ramakrishnan**, and others for the arrangements made for the Seminar.

Thiru Ramakrishnan suggested that the respective branches participating in the Seminar might forward the reports of the working Groups to the State Governments concerned with the request that they might be examined and such action as might be appropriate in the light of the local conditions, might be taken. This suggestion was agreed to with acclamation.

Thiru Ramakrishnan also suggested that there had been some informal discussion among the office-bearers of the participating regional branches and it had been agreed that every year there should be an inter-branch seminar even at each one of the centres by rotation. Subjects might be selected in consultation with other branches and brought to the inter-branch seminar after a seminar within the branch itself. It would then be possible to give the most careful consideration to matters of public importance.

Thiru K. Venkataraman proposed a vote of thanks to all concerned.

The seminar then concluded.

IN RETROSPECT

K. VENKATARAMAN, I.A.S.

What emerged from the Inter-Branch Seminar was not so much an identity of views or agreement on courses of action, but a measure of clarity of thought and an enlargement of the perspective of the issues involved. Both the subjects, namely, methods of assessment of employees and redress of public grievances, had a topical value and were live problems for which solutions had to be found. The Seminar was, therefore, bound to evoke interest. To this was added the fact that delegates of both the public and private sector, from all the regional branches in the Southern region attended. There were other delegates too—from the legislature, from the university and from the service associations themselves. Because of this, inter-branch as well as inter-disciplinary nature, the discussions in the Seminar took place on an unusually wide dimension and were acknowledged as useful to all participants.

On the main topic of the Seminar, namely, the methods of assessment of the employees, considerable discussion had to take place on the basic question itself, namely, whether there is any need for an assessment of employees. The Non-Gazetted Government Officers' Union had been pressing for the total abolition of what is known as the "Personal File System". Their representatives were present in the Seminar both in the Working Groups and in the Plenary Sessions and they presented their case forcefully. But, to the rest of the participants it was difficult to understand how an organisation like a Government Department could function without any method of assessment at all. Such difficulty in agreeing to the total abolition of the system was not confined to the practitioners of public administration alone. Thiru Dalavai, as a tax-payer and a citizen, cogently argued why such a system was necessary. The Hon'ble Justice Veeraswami, who spoke at the concluding session, was also of the view that a reporting system was essential in the public interest. At the same time, there was practically unanimous agreement that all was not well with the existing practices of assessment, since the various instructions of the Government were not scrupulously followed. Thiru Munuswami, President of the Secretariat Association, put it with perhaps the measure of exaggeration necessary to drive the point home, that the system was an engine of oppression and a source of corruption. If that was how the employees at large looked at this system, surely the system needed correction.

Suggestions about the remedies naturally varied. There was a broad spectrum of views. At one end was the suggestion of the Non-Gazetted Officer's Union for the total abolition of the system. The logical other end, that no remedy at all was not necessary, was not put in forth right terms by any one, but some speakers had pointed out that basically the system had worked and what was needed was a certain limbering up and not surgery. In between there were varying views indicating different alternatives. Firstly, on the question of coverage, there was a feeling that the present system need not be applied to routine levels, like that of Attenders, Lower Division Clerks and Upper Division Clerks. This is not to say, however, that opinion on this was uniform. There were people who doubted the wisdom of this step also. Justice Veeraswami, for instance, could see the point in advocating the abolition of the system for Attenders, but not necessarily for Clerks. Thiru Ramakrishnan pertinently asked whether it was not a fact that in the Districts even the Lower Division Clerks did original noting and were expected to come up in the Department. But, by and large, as in the Working Group, the feeling in the Seminar was that there were certain areas where there was no need for a cumbersome and controversial system.

Opinions again varied as to whether, if the personal file system was abolished at some or all levels, any other form of assessment system should be introduced. The distinction between a personal file system and other forms of assessment, subject to the question of confidence, wears thin. The suggestion was, however, made that for some levels there can be some other kind of assessment, but not necessarily the "Personal file system".

Similarly, one heard different voices on the question whether the system of reporting should be open or confidential. While a good deal was said as to why we should now have an open system, it was pointed out quite validly by some that an open system may create disharmony and was not preferable. The consensus, however, was that a measure of openness had to be introduced so as to prove that the whole system was based on trust and not distrust. The Working Group had suggested that the report written by the superior officer should be shown to be subordinate, and the subordinate should also be requested to write by himself what he considers his record is in the period in question. This latter suggestion was not as widely discussed as one would have liked.

It was, therefore, clear that certain remedies were necessary; that certain sections of employees did not require a

system of reporting in the present form and that there could be less of mystery surrounding the report. The manner in which the system can be reorganised was not clearly defined. A measure of experimentation will no doubt be necessary initially. Kerala State has taken the step of decision and has introduced certain changes, which were brought to the notice of the Seminar. Similarly, only the actual working of alternative methods can throw more light on the efficacy of the various alternatives.

The important and practical question of the norms and forms of evaluation did not receive as much scrutiny or emphasis as would otherwise have been bestowed on them. Since much of the debate had to concentrate on the basic question of the need for the personal file itself. However, a good deal was contributed to the subject of methods of evaluation, particularly by the representatives of the private sector. Certain points were validly stressed, such as the incapability of quantitative assessment in all areas, the need for training the reporting officers and more importantly the need to develop individual employees and correct their weaknesses for which a whole array of steps would be necessary.

So far as the topic of redress of public grievances is concerned, what the Seminar did can be described as a useful follow up and endorsement of the conclusions reached in the Intra-Branch Seminar of August 1963. Only two new points were stressed. One was the ubiquitous subject of the Ombudsman. The other was the suggestion for a Citizens' Advisory Bureau, the need for which was questioned by some including the legislators. There were others who appreciated that though it would not be a panacea, such Bureau can perform a limited service in limited circumstances. Here again, only actual experience can give us a clear verdict. As in the previous Seminar the need clearly emerged for initiating departmental studies, since after a point, we can no longer rest content with generalities and the problems of individual departments and the specific grievances arising there have also to be taken note of.

One practical step with which the Seminar agreed upon was that the participant branches should forward the recommendations of the Seminar to the respective Governments for consideration. There was also an informal agreement that subjects could be discussed in depth and perspective if they are first taken up in a Seminar at the Intra-Branch level and then brought up to an Inter-Branch Seminar.

PART II

EDITOR'S NOTE ON WORKING PAPERS

In response to our invitation, there was a bountiful crop of Working Papers for the Seminar. There were sixteen papers on the subject of Assessment of Employees and six on the subject of Redressal of Public Grievances. For limitation of space, a selection has had to be made and it has been most difficult, since the quality of all the papers has been uniformly good and there was little to choose from. However, keeping in mind the different types of views expressed and the interests from which they emerged, a few papers are published here.

On the subject of assessment, three papers deal with the question whether the personal file system is at all necessary. Of these one represents a view favouring the continuance of the system but with substantial modifications. The other two are papers from the Service Associations one of them arguing for total abolition at all levels and the other a modified approach to the question of abolition.

There are three papers relating to the actual methods of assessment, one of them dealing with both public and private sector and two dealing with the actual practice followed in certain firms of the private sector.

On the subject of Redressal of Public Grievances, it has been found useful to print the report of the Working Groups of the Seminar of August, 1968. In addition, a paper from the Madhya Pradesh Regional Branch and an extract from a study on the "Machinery and Procedures for Redressal of Citizens Grievances" have been added. Those who are more interested in this subject may like to refer also to this Branches Report on the Seminar of August, 1968 entitled "Redressal of Public Grievances".

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES

By

Thiruvalargal S. VISVANATHAN, I.A.S.,

M. SUNDER RAJ

and

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Assessment of employees' performance in any Organisation is important to the employer as well as the employee. In a private firm, the competence and performance of the craftsmen are assessed by means of what is called merit rating. The end-product in an industrial establishment is readily available to judge the proficiency of the worker. In Government service, personal files have been playing a significant part in determining the prospects of the employees. Motivation and promotion policy are important factors that have to be kept in view in order to achieve maximum efficiency and smooth working of the Government Organisation. While motivation encourages employees to give of their best at work, any promotion policy is fundamental to the development of the Organisation. "Right promotion at right time is an essential part of the process of developing to the full talents of the men and women in the service". Personal files, among others, to a large extent determine promotions.

The system of maintaining Personal Files which depict the performance of an individual over a period of time has obvious merits; it enables decisions on promotions and the selection of the best; it also enables placement of Government servants in jobs for which they possess marked aptitude. Besides, any Officer taking over an office can gather an idea of the men who work under him by going through the personal files. The basic features of this system as it obtains in Madras are :—

(i) It is usually written half-yearly;

(ii) The report is usually written by a Reporting Officer who is the head of the office in smaller offices or an Officer of a suitable rank in higher offices. This report is countersigned by a higher Officer.

(iii) Suitable forms have been devised and suitable instructions issued to enable a fair and comprehensive assessment of the person reported upon.

In the above background, it would be interesting to probe into the origin of the institution of these personal files. The Northcote-Trevelyan Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service in U.K. in the year 1853 has the following to say in regard to merit, seniority and the Book of reference :—

“The theory of the public service is that the annual increase of salary, from the minimum to the maximum of the class, is given as matter of course as the reward of service and with no reference to the comparative merits of the individuals; but that promotion from class to class is the reward of merit, or rather that it is regulated by a consideration of the public interests, and that those only are to be transferred from one class to a higher who have shown themselves capable of rendering valuable services in it. This salutary principle is, however, in practice often overlooked, and promotion from class to class, as well as the annual rise within the class, is more commonly regulated by seniority than by merit. The evil consequences of this are too obvious to require lengthened comment; it is, perhaps, more important to point out some of the difficulties which lie in the way of amendment.

If the opinions of the gentlemen engaged in the Civil Service could be taken on the subject of promotion, it would probably be found that a very large majority of them would object strongly to what is called promotion by merit. The reason they would assign would be that promotion by (so called) merit would usually become promotion by favouritism. The effect of the system of departmental patronage has been to inspire the clerks in each office with a feeling of jealousy towards any one who is supposed to enjoy the especial favour of the chief of the department, or still more, of the principal permanent officer in it. Constituted as our official system now is, men feel, and not unreasonably, that the recognition of their merits, even within their own departments, is extremely uncertain, and that there is no appeal to any public tribunal if injustice is done them there. Even in an open profession, a consciousness of unrecognised merit will sometimes weigh a man down, though he has always the hope that the justice which is denied him in one quarter will be done to him in another. In an office, if a clerk fails to please his immediate superior, he is probably condemned to obscurity for his whole life. The Parliamentary chief who presides over the department for a few years, and who is overwhelmed with business, can, as a general rule, know nothing of the merits of individual clerks in the lower rank of the office, except through the permanent officers at its head. Now, setting aside cases of actual

favouritism, there must be many instances in which the chief permanent officers fail to perceive, and properly to bring into notice, the valuable qualities of those beneath them. A man may be timid and hesitating in manner, and on that account may be passed over as dull, in favour of someone by no means his superior in real worth, but having more address in recommending himself, or on the other hand, the chief officer may have taken a particular fancy to some young man on his first entrance into the department and may have thrown in his way special opportunities of advancing himself, which others have not had. All such cases are watched with jealousy even now, and if promotion by seniority were wholly set aside, without the introduction of proper safeguards, they would be the cause of still more discomfort.

It ought, therefore, to be a leading object with the Government so to regulate promotion by merit as to provide every possible security against its abuse; and for this purpose we are of opinion that the following system should be adopted. On the occurrence of a vacancy in any class, the Chief Clerk, or other immediately superior officer, should furnish the Secretary of the department with a return of the names of a certain number (in no case less than three) of the Clerks at the head of the class below, accompanied by a special report upon the services and qualifications of each. In case there should be in the lower ranks of the class any man of merit decidedly superior to those above him, his name, with a note of his qualifications should be added. The Secretary, should make what remarks he thinks proper upon the list, and should then submit it to the Head of the Office, who should select the person to be promoted, and should make out and sign a warrant for his promotion, setting forth the grounds upon which it is made. A book should be kept in every office, in which should be entered the name and age of each Clerk or other Officer, at the time of his appointment, the dates of his examination, first appointment, and subsequent promotions, together with notes of all the reports made upon him from time to time, either on the occasions afforded by the occurrence of vacancies or at other times, in consequence of some special instance either of good or ill behaviour. A reference to this book on the occasion of promoting to vacancies will enable the Head of the Department to form a tolerably correct estimate of the merits of each individual. It may be noticed that such a book is kept, with very good results in the Commissariat Department."

The reference book indicated in this report probably was the starting point of what we call today "The Personal File".

In its chequered career over a long time, the Personal File has undergone different changes to suit the specific needs and purposes of different departments both in U.K. and in other countries.

Two things stand out when one evaluates the system as it is to-day. Firstly, there is a growing feeling that the system is a farce and an evil farce at that. It is now frequently argued that Reporting Officers do not give a fair and unbiased picture of the persons they report upon and that the field is open for all kinds of nepotism and corruption. There are some people who strongly hold the view that these reports are written on communal lines and that the system has, on this score, become obnoxious. So the argument is that the system of personal files should be abolished or at any rate modified into an open system like that of the army where what is reported upon, whether good or bad, is known to the person reported upon.

Secondly, the system has fallen into a rut by imperfect implementation. Sometimes, reports are not written up at all. Sometimes, they are written up far too late for the Officer to retain a proper perspective of the individual's work; adverse remarks remain uncommunicated either for a length of time or for ever. A vague and non-committal report of a few lines is a favourite practice with many officers, who find it convenient either because of lack of familiarity with the man's work or because of fear of being challenged. The reports are either fragmentary or so contaminated by various inaccuracies or ambiguities as to be almost unusable. A careful, comprehensive and purposeful assessment is an exception rather than a rule. The cynic would look askance at merit promotions since he says, he knows what stuff the personal file is made of. Besides, appeals for expunging adverse remarks are not infrequent and always couched in terms which question the *bona fides* of the Reporting Officer. The Reporting Officer is practically put on the dock and rather than face all kinds of questionings, he would write a non-committal report. When all these facts are taken into account there is a case for arguing that the personal file system as it works today is defective.

There is also a view that much of the suspicion relating to the Personal File is the direct result of the secrecy surrounding it. In a positive way, it is suggested that there should be free communication of remarks left by the reporting officers.

The problems posed are therefore:—

(1) Whether the present system of maintenance of Personal Files is satisfactory?

(2) Whether it can be abolished ? and

(3) If so, what is the alternative ?

(4) If maintained, whether a free communication of remarks will in any way remove the suspicions concerning the Personal file ?

Enough has been said to show that the existing system is not satisfactory and as for free communication of remarks, G. O. No. 1583 dated 5th November 1915 (Government of Madras) speaks eloquently as follows :—

“ 2. The diversity of practice which obtains is sufficient evidence of the difficulty of applying hard-and-fast rules to the subject, which is one of great importance both to the efficiency of administration and to the interests of the officers of Government, but while recognizing that some measure of elasticity is a necessary corollary, the Government of India see no reason why, if certain guiding principles are laid down as appropriate to all departments and in all provinces, there should be any difficulty in giving general effect to them. The arguments on both sides are well known in favour of free communication are the contentions that it is not fair to condemn a man behind his back and that unless a man is told of his defects he has the less chance of rectifying them. On the other hand in justification of the exercise of discretion in the extent and manner of communication it may be urged that if every unfavourable comment is to be passed on, superior officers will be apt to refrain from giving candid opinions on the merits of their subordinates, which would be an undesirable consequence; secondly, that the communication of remarks in many cases will only lead to defences, objections and frictions; thirdly, that superior officers can be trusted not to make improper use of the system of confidential reports. None of these considerations is without weight, especially as a general picture of an officer's merits or demerits, so far as the reporting authority has had full opportunity of judging of them, must be regarded as of considerably more value than a report under certain specified headings which has a tendency to become stereotyped and lifeless. But it is the descriptive report which is apt to contain remarks of which it is inexpedient to apprise the officer concerned. Again, there may be good reasons why the departmental head or any other authority dealing with the report should withhold final judgment, he would in such cases be well advised to await a subsequent report, which might either modify or corroborate previous criticisms; in the former event no harm will have been done to the officer concerned; in the latter it would then be time enough to address him. It is also

the case that at the time of report many observations upon ability and temperament suggest themselves which it is useless to convey to the officer reported upon. Such defects may be irremediable and their publication would only embitter or discourage the recipient. Further, the method of communication is often a consideration of much importance. The best form is frequently a personal letter giving credit for what is good, while instancing what requires to be corrected. The annual enumeration of defects without any acknowledgment of useful work done, may only lead to discouragement and soreness and do more harm than good. There is often a marked resentment of criticism on the part of a good officer which, however unreasonable, is genuinely felt, and may have a prejudicial effect on his future efficiency. For this reason, the method to be employed in pointing out to an officer his particular shortcomings should be determined by a consideration of his individual temperament. Finally, in many possibly the majority of cases, the superior officer has already in one shape or another, made the defect or defects brought to notice the subject of warning or remonstrance. Examples of the fault or shortcomings will have occurred in daily work and will have been commented upon at the time, and it is therefore most desirable that a reporting officer should always state explicitly whether the attention of his subordinate has already been drawn to the defects noticed. Such an obligation would in itself tend to make the superior officer careful to avoid hasty and superficial comments ”.

As for the abolition of the Personal File, it would not be wise to forget that modern Government make heavy demands on civil servants at every level and that Government are interested in efficient public administration which requires men of merit and their placement in suitable jobs. The abolitionist has to spell out alternative arrangements for :—

- i. Merit promotions and even promotions of fit persons according to seniority after rejecting the unfit ;
- ii. Placement of persons in suitable jobs ; and
- iii. The availability of information to a new Head of Office about his subordinates.

The abolitionist will hit the ball out of the court so far as item (iii) is concerned saying that each Head of Office has to find for himself how his subordinates are. As regards items (i) and (ii), he will argue that the Head of Office at the time of the event, can as well make recommendation about suitability for promotions and placements. But this would magnify

the abuses in a personal file system since while previously we had atleast the reports of a number of persons about a person's work, we will now have to rely on the report of one and one person only who in addition may or may not have sufficient knowledge of the person reported upon.

If the abolitionist's argument is impractical, what kind of changes are necessary? Having ruled out razing the structure to the ground, should we advocate spring cleaning, structural alterations or additions or complete re-building?

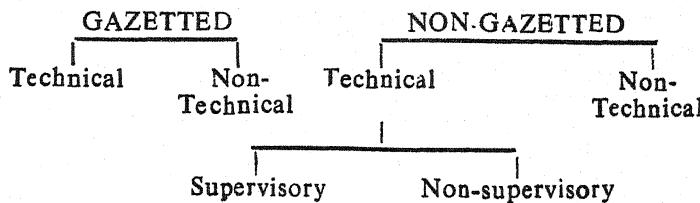
The experience of the Army as well as private business may be relevant. In Army, it is stated that the person reported upon is actually called to the Reporting Officer's room, where the latter's assessment is read out and the former signs in token of having known the assessment. The assessment is, of course, confidential so far as persons other than these two are concerned. In private business there is bound to be a considerable measures of diversity in procedures. In small firms, as well as those where a single man dominates, assessment is bound to go by factors like subjective judgment, results achieved, personal associations etc.,. Such judgments can be assailed as much as any judgment made by an Officer of Government. In larger companies in private sectors where some more of the impersonal comes into play, there must be some reporting system. But human nature being what, is it not to be expected that such reporting in the private sector can also be assailed on the same grounds which are urged against Government officials? There is another basic point, namely, that in the private sector, perhaps the rough and ready criterion will be whether a man has delivered the goods. Consistent with the objectives to be realised, the standards of performances can be easily and broadly defined. In the Army too, it can be argued that there are precisely definable methods of judging a man's performance. In Government jobs the 'definability factor' varies from job to job and department to department. Not many results can be judged by quantity alone.

In the administrative set-up, there are several categories of posts and several avenues for promotion. At non-gazetted level, the Head of the Office has a greater discretion guided no doubt by the personal file in promoting the Government Servants. At the Gezettled level, it is worth noting that a separate, autonomous and statutory body like the State Public Service Commission makes the selection for promotion after due consideration of the confidential record and in consultation with the Head of the Department who sits with the Commission during selection. This, to a large extent, adds to the obiectivity of assessment and fairness of selection.

The period of probation which is normally fixed for a Government servant has also its advantage in that the probationary Government servant is kept under close watch and guidance. He has sufficient time to improve his performance and be eligible for completing probation which means elevation in status, increase in emolument and a step forward towards further promotion.

The following suggestions may be considered as alternatives :—

Government employees may be classified as shown below:—



A book of entry for each Government servant may be maintained. This book will contain information about the quantum and quality of work done by the Government servant and supplied by the Government servant himself. The Government servant himself will prepare three copies of his information, retain one copy himself and send two copies to his immediate superior who will scrutinise the copies, keep one copy and send the other up to the reporting officer. The third copy will be filed as it is with the Personal File. This procedure may look a little cumbersome but it has got apparent advantage in the original report itself will be available for perusal at the time of selection or appeal to any superior officer. The report is one compiled by the employee himself and it is also scrutinised by an immediate officer.

Such information will be supplied by him once in a month or at periodical intervals which will be incorporated by the reporting officer in this book. He will also check up this book periodically as in the case of personal registers and see that this book of entry is up-to-date. Making use of this book, the reporting officer will write his confidential remarks. This is a step forward in the sense that the Government servant has an opportunity to supply materials about his own work to his reporting officer. What information he has given cannot be disputed by him at a later date.

The proforma or the questionnaire for reporting should be clear and concise without too many ambiguous and general questions keeping in view the demands of the job which the Government servant or the category of Government servants have to perform. A skeleton form may be devised by the Working Group.

3. While retaining the confidential nature of the report, there should be periodical and timely communication of adverse remarks and legitimate avenues of appeal. After the appeal is over, further correspondence relating to expunction of adverse remarks should not be entertained by any authority. Periodically, the reporting officer will meet the bad or indifferent Government servants and talk to them about their performance and suggest ways and means to improve it.

Reporting Officers in general may have to be told clearly as to what is expected in their reports. If necessary, in-service training and a series of talks by experts in personnel management and administration etc. may have to be arranged at suitable levels. As it is, there is no departmental promotion or selection board as such to consider the comparative merits of the eligible candidates. The constitution of a Departmental Selection or Promotion Board may also be thought of. These measures may increase the measure of objectivity and filter subjectivity and bring about a sense of satisfaction, however incomplete it may be, to the Government servants. It must be said to the credit of the Britisher that he gave the impression to the public and the generality of Government servants, however justified or unjustified it may be, that he was fair and impartial. Any solution will not be a satisfactory solution unless and until the shroud of secrecy about the personal files and the penumbra of suspicion concerning them are removed from the minds of Government servants.

To some extent it might be said that the administration runs on trust and in a system of administration like ours it may be difficult, nay even impossible to devise a method by which the performance of a Government servant can be kept under close and constant supervision. Having reposed confidence in our officer to maintain the purity of the administration by the conduct as Government servants, it may be reasonable to expect that they would exhibit and bring to bear an equal measure of objectivity and fairplay in the dealing, with the subordinates including the more delicate task of making a periodical assessment of their work and conduct.

ABOLITION OF PERSONAL FILES

Working Paper

Presented

by

THE TAMIL NADU

NON-GAZETTED GOVERNMENT OFFICERS' UNION

INTRODUCTION :

The Tamilnadu N. G. G. Os' Union, Madras from the inception of its organisation has been representing for the abolition of Personal Files. The Union thought that the Personal File would be totally abolished after the Independence of the Country, as the maintenance of the File was held as a tool by the British Rulers to prevent entering of "National Minded Men" in Administration and to select "Yes-Men" as the so-called "Obedient Servants". Even after the declaration of our country as a Republic, the system continued without any change. The Union had, therefore, through various conferences and the Joint Civil Services Council has appealed to the Government for the abolition of Personal Files. The terms of reference made by the Union in all occasions were total abolition of Personal Files and not for the maintenance of Open File System rather than Confidential System.

The argument put forth by the Government's side or Officer's side may be the following for retaining the Personal File in the present system of confidential maintenance.

- a) The system is in existence for a long period.
- b) The system which depicts the performance of an individual over a period of time has obvious merits.
- c) Helps selection of the best for promotion.
- d) Enables placement of Government Servants in jobs for which they possess marked aptitude.
- e) Gives the new Officer who has taken charge of the Office an idea of the men who work under him.
- f) Traditional Administrators would regard the abolition or modification of the system as an *egregious* step.

The Union considers that the above points mentioned are not valid points for the retention of Personal Files and place the following as their views :

System is in existence for long :

The maintenance of Personal Files are not covered by any Code Rules. This is being maintained only from the period of the British Rule. There is no evidence in any of the records of ancient Rulers of Tamilnadu or any Rulers in India as to the maintenance of such Files for assessing the work of their subordinates. It is, therefore, to be decided that this has been introduced only by the British Rulers. It is a well known fact that the post of Officers were held only by the Britishers and such a method might have been felt necessary by them to select to higher posts only those who are obedient to the British Rulers. Its existence for a long time should not be the criterion for deciding the retention. It should be examined whether the system which was introduced by the British Rulers, is necessary, based on the present context of Constitutional provision and changed conditions of Democratic set up.

System which depicts the performance of an individual over a period of time has obvious merits.

The nature of work in Government Offices varies from job to job and department to department. In an Office there will be posts carrying routine machine-like work and work requiring sufficient study, compilation, review etc. The performance cannot be compared as each job will have its own method of working. The holders of posts may be transferred from one post to another and the performance recorded while holding one post cannot be taken into account when he holds another post. The individual Government Servant has to work in various jobs having various nature of work and a comparison cannot depict the real performance of the person. Further if the performance of an individual is recorded favourably or unfavourably in alternate reports, the grade of performance will not be decisive or determined. There may be good reports continuously and if only the last report is bad the question arises whether the report last written will carry weight? If the last report alone is taken, what is the use of perusing "over a period" of personal reports? Recording individual performance in bigger Offices will be mere farse, as the Officer who is writing the Personal File may not have any chance of having contact with each and every person. Similarly, the authority who countersign may also have to sign the report of an individual with whom he may not have had contact. In the circumstances, the Personal Files maintained cannot be a real record to show the performance of the individual in his post or present career. In essence, the present system is nothing but an individual comment mostly based on guess work, if not by whims and fancies.

Helps selection of the best for promotion :

The promotion to the higher posts are not done based on the reports. There is no prescribed procedure to compare the performances of work to decide the superiority of report, over others. The selection to higher posts, so far as N.G.G. Os are concerned, is done by the immediate controlling officers or by Heads of Departments. In almost all cases, it depends upon the officers in charge at whose period the selection to higher post is made. If the report recorded by him, being the latest report is recorded as good overlooking the previous bad reports there may not be any authority to deny the promotion. Similarly, if the latest report recorded is bad, the previous ones which are good will not be given weight. The selection to higher posts depends upon the whims and fancies of the officer under whose period the selection to the higher post is made. If the argument that selection of the best for promotion is helped by Personal File is correct, one would expect that promotion to the posts are being done from among the best lot in view of the existence of Personal Files at present. Can the Government prove that all the Offices now run under the 'able' guidance of Officers who are selected on the basis of Personal Files are being run efficiently to standout as a good Administration? If so, why such criticisms for failure of schemes, remarks of Public Accounts Committee, cases of corruption and malpractices etc. seen at various levels? Have the Government taken any action against the Officers who recommended for promotion such officers who proved corrupt and responsible for the failure of schemes, etc. There are both best and bad administrators on staff selected through Personal Files at present. Hence the argument, that the Personal Files assist selecting the best lot has no basis or is a conclusive proof. The Union can prove this conclusion if the Government permit the Union representatives to scrutinise the Personal Files of the present administrators who were declared as good or bad by Government. That is to say the comments of the higher officials about their subordinates need not necessarily reflect the reality and therefore, the best interest of Government cannot be vouchsafed or zealously protected by the present system of Personal Files.

Enables placement of Government Servants in jobs for which they possess marked aptitude.

Almost in all cases of writing of Personal Files, the aptitude of an individual is not being recorded. There is no Government policy instructing the Officers to post the individuals in posts where such persons have marked aptitude. On the other hand in public service, the Government Servants are expected to work in any post posted and any representation

made by the individuals to be posted in a particular post or place is even liable for disciplinary action or summary rejection. Postings are done according to whims and fancies of officers and not according to the aptitude or willingness of Government Servants. In public service, it may also not be practicable to post the Government Servants to the places they desire or to posts for which they have aptitude. If more number of persons have aptitude to a particular post which may be due to nature of work, accessibility to his native place or some other reason, what the Government or Officer will do for selecting persons from so called "Aptitude Personalities ?". Will the Government or Officer again decide for selecting more aptitude person ? Selection of Officers or Government Servants are made only to particular class of posts and not for particular posts in Government Departments.

Gives the new Officers who took charge of the Office an idea of the men who work under him.

For examining this point, we have to discuss the following:

- (1) Whether the matters written in the Personal File gives details to form an idea about the persons working under an Officer ?
- (2) What is the guarantee that the reports written are unbiased ?

As already pointed out, the work in each and every post in a Government Office is different. Their efficiency cannot be judged from the mere words of "Good" "Fair" etc. Further a Government Servant may have to work in different posts within a year and the report cannot cover each and every point to be taken into account for deciding his capacity, capability and performance.

The following few examples which were published in the magazines of this Union will give a fair idea of what useful purpose could be served to a new officer about the subordinates working under him :

A collector wrote as follows of his subordinate :

- (1) "Taluk Head Accountant is very well counting the copper coins in his Treasury"
"Occasionally he bungles things but he can always be depended upon to do what is right"

(2) A Taluk Headquarters Revenue Inspector was a military returned. He was not very familiar with the involved and complicated dharkast rules, but he knew well how to present arms when the Collector visited his firka. He aligned all his village menials with sticks in hand and saluted him in the right royal military fashion and this caught the Collector's imagination. Of him, the Collector wrote in his Personal File.

"A good Disciplinarian; can maintain law and order excellently well"

In a bigger office there may be a number of persons having similar name and merely by going through the report, the officer cannot have an idea about his subordinates. The Officer may not have contact with most of the staff for whom he is empowered to write the Personal Files. The following is an actual instance which is of course funny but it shows how the Personal File is "useful" to the new Officer or for promotion.

Just then, under the auspices of the Revenue Club, there was a benefit performance over which the Collector presided. The hero of the play was however, in the person of a drawing master of the local High School for want of a suitable person then in the revenue staff. His name also was Karimuthu by sheer coincidence. The show was a brilliant one and at the end of the performance, the hero was profusely garlanded and complimented for his act as a Maha Rajah of the play. The Collector and his wife were much impressed with him. The next day, the Collector while sending up the Head Clerk's name for promotion wrote thus :

"Karimuthu of Divisional Office is a prince among the head clerks and he will truly make out to be a very useful member of the Madras Revenue Subordinate Service. He has marvellous capacity for work and I may add from my personal knowledge that his bearing and personality entitle him to immediate promotion".

The Union is of strong view that the Personal File is not the instrument to form an idea about the person.

Traditional Administrators would regard the abolition or modification of the system as an egregious step.

The term "Traditional Administration" has no basis when we plan for a good administration on a scientific system: If the so called present system is good why should we think of

modifying it? Administration always depends upon the holders of the posts, and it is to be decided whether the "Traditional Administration" is continuing even after the Independence? After the independence, various aspects of "Tradition" were changed to suit the Constitutional provisions. Departments have been re-organised, new posts for Administration were created and there is changed condition at all levels. The Personal Files are written about the staff by an Officer and about the Officer by his higher Officers. The reports are written about almost on all Government Servants and Officers by each higher Official. For a Good and efficient administration, the suspicion of one man to other should be completely eradicated. If the proposal to abolish the Personal Files is considered as a change over of "Traditional Administration", the Union feels that such a radical change is necessary in the present context of "*Democracy*" to eradicate natural distrust and suspicion and to ensure willing Co-operation and to maintain self-respect. The phrase "Traditional Administration" itself is out-dated and outmoded in an age of radical reformations.

Whether discipline and control is assured by the Present System :

Our direct answer to this question is 'No'. The so called discipline and control under the dress of this weapon of Personal Files cannot be a constructive contribution to Government machinery. On the other hand, favouritism and nepotism is perpetuated and nurtured by this system. Unless a subordinate dances to the tunes of his Officer, there is no guarantee of security in service because of this mighty weapon of Personal File vested with the Officers. To put it mildly, the enforced discipline and control through the means of Personal File is neither discipline nor control in a strict sense and it is nothing but slavery. The Conduct rules have ample provision to maintain discipline and decorum in Government Service.

Efficiency under the present system :

In the opinion of the Union, the Personal Files have absolutely no relevancy to gauge one's efficiency. All the Officers are not genuine and experts. Even if they were, there is risk of error in judgement. With so much of inherent defect, efficiency can never be gauged and even if gauged it cannot be accurate. Above all, the Head of an Office or an Institution, is solely responsible for efficient administration of his Office. It therefore follows if he is efficient, administration will be efficient. If otherwise, the result will be alarming. So measuring of efficiency in the subordinate ranks for overall efficiency of a particular office or institution is both superfluous and infructuous while spreading evils of the Personal File all round.

Alternative System—Why ?

A Government Servant enters Service either through Madras Public Service Commission after due examinations and tests or enters service by direct recruitment after undergoing several prescribed tests. After that he is required to pass departmental tests and is placed on probation to test his worthiness or competency. Thereafter, his probation is declared satisfactorily. Here, every one should concede, that a particular Government Servant is alright and deserving to hold that particular post after declaration of probation. With the background there is no case for hanging on to another machinery or system in the name of Personal File while giving promotion. So all the entries made in Service Register (to be amplified if necessary) will meet the situation and (constructive) by itself will be a sufficient record to consider one's efficiency and competency to promote him to any higher post. In case, if such a person in that higher post proves to be either unfit or misfit for that post, it is quite open to the administration to terminate his probation and revert him back to his old position. Not only that, the Government reserve their right to revert any person at any time on the ground of inefficiency or incompetency. While such enormous powers are vested with the administration already to deal with undeserving promotees, no other alternative measure is called for. Any other alternative measure in this context will thrust unnecessary hardships to all the Government Servants concerned which will in turn become a hot bed of politics. Our Union therefore stands for the total abolition of Personal Files unhesitatingly and unreservedly.

PERSONAL FILES - WHAT, HOW AND WHY?

By

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1. What is meant by a Personal file ?

The personal file consists of periodical reports of an employee written sometimes every half year and sometimes every year. It is supposed to contain the details of the efficiency, integrity and other qualities or otherwise of the employee. These are called character rolls by some but are generally termed as personal files. These files are treated as confidential and the contents are kept as a closely guarded secret. Of late due to the change in the character of administration and due to the demands of the Employee's Associations, the adverse remarks including the remediable defects are being communicated to the employees concerned within a reasonable time and the employees are being given the right of appeal. The appellate authorities after examining the appeal either reject them or expunge the remarks.

2. What is the origin of the personal file ?

It is not known when the system of maintaining the personal files was instituted. The study of public administration in India reveals that Chanakya had followed a system of reporting about the Government employees. He warned ministers against implicit faith in the reports of the Inspecting Officers. He says that unless the information derived from three independent sources corroborates, it should not be held reliable.

Kautilya's Arthashastra written circa 300 B. C. in an extensive treatise on Government and Administration states on public personnel..."for a man's ability is inferred from his capacity shown in work".

During the period of Moghul administration which adopted the Arabic Administrative system this method of administration gave way because of communal bias and bigotry. Being themselves alien and being interested in forcing their foreign laws of administration they disbelieved the natives and employed men and evolved machineries in administration to collect particulars of conduct of the Government employees especially Hindus and kept them as secret records.

During the period of Indian Administration by the East India Company the same principle was followed for the reasons similar to those adopted by the Moghuls on Indian Government employees for obvious reason. After the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown the system has been regularised in an effective manner and crept in the code of law.

This short history will clearly show that there might have been a system of reporting about the Government employees in India but that it has been followed by Invaders in a bad way by maintaining it in a confidential manner perhaps as a weapon to sack those who were found to be disloyal to their Government.

3. What is the object of the personal file ?

Perhaps the idea behind the institution of personal file is to enable an officer to record his considered opinion about those serving under him and it was considered that superior officers can be trusted not to make an improper use of the system of writing confidential personal files.

The primary object of the personal file as it is now understood and utilised is that it serves a record for considering the promotion of the individual.

4. Is the object of personal files fulfilled ? If not, why ?

Both the employer and the Public Service Commission depend mainly upon the entries in the personal files for promoting the employees. When this record has assumed such significant character all sorts of nepotism and corruption have crept in. Government employees have sought for the favours of their superiors and got good entries for it is only these entries and not their work which could get promotion. As the Government and the Public Service Commission were understood to be blindly guided only by the remarks in the personal files, the reporting officers have their chance of obtaining supplies and services, some say, before writing good reports. Some others say that caste and communal consideration play a very important part in writing remarkably well to employees of their own community and that the employees from Harijans and Backward Communities from whom there are practically very few reporting officers are not obtaining such benefits.

It is also said by some that in this State which is full of caste, communal and linguistic prejudices and misunderstandings many superior officers would hardly be trusted to be able

to rise above the temptation opened by the present system of making an improper use of the opportunities to look up to their fellow castemen and whomsoever they like or cry down the rest and pave the way for their promotion quicker than those of their seniors. They also say there are heartless men among officers who flinch to write well about really capable men due to communal or other bias.

Secondly there is no definite and concrete yardstick for assessment of any Government servant for recording them in their personal files. It is based merely upon one's opinion and as such it loses its basic requirement of being just and it is not based on any concrete hypothesis. It cannot also be uniform because the sentimental opinions are apt to differ from man to man and for the same man from one period to another.

It reminds the words of Sir Walter Scott in his "Bride of Dammermoor", "Show me the person, and I will show you the law". When the assessment is thus based upon personal opinion of the officers, the Government servants naturally have to attend more to the personal whims and caprices of the officer than to the real work. This change of mental priorities leads to inefficiency in official work and lets loose the evils of favouritism.

Thirdly the remarks in the personal files could not be taken as Gospel truth because Government servants are made to serve under atleast four of five officers at different intervals and that six months period by which the reports are written will only be formal and bad or good remarks would give room for suspicions.

Fourthly when promoting authorities are interested in any one either personally or on some influence they keep such persons for long periods directly under themselves and continue to give them good remarks over those really efficient.

Fifthly the distinction made between the remediable and irremediable defects has not been made clear. It would of course be cruel to tell a man that he is deaf and that his handwriting is illegible but should it not be more cruel if he is kept in darkness about the so called irremediable defects of the kind above stated ? Cannot a deaf man attempt to provide a hearing aid or an illigible hand to improve his hand or a short tempered man to cool himself in official duties ? It is only based on such remarks promotions are considered.

5. Why and how should the personal file be maintained ?

Well, if the very objectives of the personal file are not fulfilled, why should the personal file be continued to be maintained.

It is argued by some that without the personal file the efficiency of services will be lowered. This is a stock argument used everytime the question of abolition of personal file is mooted. No one will be ever impressed by the argument as it is only hypothetical. In fact services especially in the subordinate levels will work more efficiently if they are made aware that nobody can be stabbed behind and hit below their belts. It will not be out of place to mention here the speech of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar on the floor of the Madras Legislative Council in the year 1946 in this regard exposing the public reaction "the unconscionable uses to which the system is prostituted".

Again this time honoured system suffers from two serious defects :

- (i) The present day public administration is a large scale organisation. It is not possible for Head of Department to be in direct contact with all employees. So the system is unrealistic; and
- (ii) this system is susceptible to personal and other extraneous consideration and hence unreliable.

Further, because of the heterogenous and complex nature of development administration, a shift in approach to the personnel system and administration is necessary. A proper balance should be created in the avenues to organisational power between the various reorganised services to ensure fairness to all services. This can be achieved only by chalking out a well developed promotion policy replacing the present outmoded system of maintenance of personal files.

It is also suggested whether the evils attended by the present system of maintaining the personal files in a confidential manner cannot be annihilated if it is replaced by an open personal file system as is being followed in Defence Departments. It is stated that in Defence Services the personal file is written in duplicate at the prescribed periodic intervals and the duplicate copy is given to the individual concerned immediately and receipt obtained, of course with the right of appeal against the adverse remarks if any recorded therein. The system of open

personal file system is finding favour with a sector of Government employees on the plea that when adverse remarks of some kind can be communicated why good remarks should not be communicated to the persons concerned. In fact if Good remarks are communicated the employees would endeavour more to keep up their efficiency besides obtaining the sublime satisfaction as Mark Twain has said "I can live for two months on a good compliment".

The following objections and difficulties may perhaps be raised against the above system :

(i) The reporting officer may not be able to record his remarks with complete freedom as it would be difficult to call a spade a spade.

(ii) The reporting officers may be put to a lot of inconvenience as they would be questioned about or to explain their remarks and that in order to avoid all these he would be constrained to write a report not true to his mind ;

(iii) The employee will become complacent if he is told that his work is excellent, perhaps it may go to his head and make it big and the very remarks would do more harm to his future conduct.

Considering the evils enumerated in the preceding paragraphs attending to the system of maintaining the personal files in a confidential manner, the system of maintaining the personal file in an open manner will be more democratic devoid of the devastating effects on the public administration.

There is another shade of opinion among the ranks of the subordinate Government servants that there is no real advantage of having the personal file either in an open manner or in a confidential manner. It is argued by them that if only promotions can be made strictly according to seniority, then the service Registers containing the service particulars would be enough for the purpose and that the Personal Files would become superfluous. Their contention is that the personal file is used as an effective weapon against the subordinate staff and that this acts as a nightmare for all efficient and honest workers. This argument is based on the premises that promotions should be made strictly on seniority basis. But looking into the service angle, promotions are not made strictly on seniority basis but they are made according to merit without prejudice to seniority. This does not mean that seniority alone decides the factors of promotion. If the argument of this type

of thinkers is to be conceded then the Government will have to concede promotion only by seniority and not by merit. This sort of a thinking has gained ground in the minds of certain ranks presumably because of the fact that for sometime past promotions are being made invariably on the basis of seniority irrespective of educational qualifications, special aptitudes, special incentives taken etc. much to the discontentment of the highly qualified, really efficient workers who were accidentally elbowed out as juniors due to the circumstances beyond their control. The best solution to this kind of a problem is to ensure to the services a well developed promotion policy.

6. What is meant by well developed promotion policy :

A well developed promotion policy will

- (i) keep the personnel efficient; and
- (ii) ensure rewards for efficient service.

A wrong promotion system demoralises the whole organisation. Promotion policy should be based on equity, justice and fair play and it should not be guided by particular interests of individual employees. Now the area of eligibility for promotion is determined only by the assessment made in the personal files plus blind seniority. This can be substituted by instituting promotion boards as is found for the Central Services of our own country as well as in other foreign countries.

In some states of America especially in Wisconsin and Australia, promotions are made on the basis of the information given in the report of the Departmental Head supplemented by the independent report of the examiners.

In the United Kingdom under the Whitley Council Scheme a representative of the subordinate staff is also associated with the Promotion Board. The report form is made more scientific and objective with a view to avoid favouritism and corruption. The form prescribes the assessment of the following ten qualities :

- i) Knowledge of branch/Department ;
- ii) Personality and force of character ;
- iii) Judgment ;
- iv) Power of taking responsibility ;
- v) Initiative ;
- vi) Accuracy ;
- vii) Address and tact ;
- viii) Power of supervising staff ;
- ix) Zeal ;
- x) Official conduct.

In France under the Fourth Republic this system was established by the Statut General des Fonctionnaires of October 19, 1946, by which the Heads of Departments have to prepare numerical statements of efficiency of the employees.

In the U.S.A, the Americans have made efficiency rating a very detailed affair. They have tried it to make it mathematical, automatic accurate and very objective guide for determination of efficiency. This is a highly mechanical method of successfully assessing the qualities of the public employees. There are three major types in this system which are

- (i) Production Records;
- (ii) Graphic Rating Scale; and
- (iii) Personality Inventory.

Again in our own country, for the Central Services, the Government of India follows a system by which all promotional matters are handled by the Departmental promotion committees. In fact all promotions to 'selection' as well as 'non-selection' posts and confirmation of employees are attended to by these committees. The U.P.S.C. is represented in the Departmental promotion committee.

It should not be mistaken that this paper on personal files has been digressed upon a different subject namely the promotion policy. Inasmuch as the promotions in this State are based only upon the remarks contained in the personal file it has become necessary to point out how if the promotion policy is well developed the evils of the personal file system can be effaced.

If a system of the kind followed either in the U.S.A. or by our own Central Government for promotional matters, is adopted and followed in our State, then there will be no need to maintain a personal file in secret, as the report form for efficiency rating can be maintained openly without any drawbacks either on the side of the reporting officers or on the side of the employees reported upon.

7. Conclusion :

It would therefore be seen that the present system of maintaining the personal files for Government employees in a secret manner is beset with a lot of misgivings, distrusts and deficiencies, that there is a powerful case for adopting a well developed

promotion policy and that the personal file may be maintained in an open manner supplying to the individual concerned a duplicate copy of the report as soon as it is written under acknowledgment in the original report without prejudice to the right of appeal against the adverse remarks if any recorded therein.

The suggestion is not revolutionary as some conservatives may likely to put it nor is it conservative as some revolutionaries would like to say. Considering the functional propriety and convenience of the Governmental machinery and also the growing mind of the employees the suggestion made above is worthy of giving an honest trial.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Late Prime Minister of India, said, "the whole structure of the Government has changed from rather an autocratic structure to a democratic structure.....", and keeping in view the above view let us move towards the ideals of democracy.

**APPRAISAL AND REPORTING OF EMPLOYEES'
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR
UNDERTAKINGS IN KERALA**

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Introduction :

Most of the literature available on the subject of appraisal of Employees' performance relates to theoretical considerations which should determine the technique of such appraisal. An effort is made in this paper to survey practices in certain Government Companies and Private Sector enterprises. Because the paper had to be completed in a fairly short time, it has not been possible to collect materials from many establishments outside Kerala and the study therefore is with special reference to the conditions obtaining in this state.

2. Some general remarks : The system of keeping confidential records of employees' performances seems to have been inspired by Government practices in this respect. Many of the Private Sector Companies contacted in the course of the study reported that they do not have any formal reporting procedure on employees' performances. One Manager of a fairly large Private Sector establishment has explained the reason as follows :

"We are almost in day to day touch with work and performances of the employees and therefore an assessment is not very difficult. If any draw-back is found out on the part of any employee it will be brought to his notice in the ordinary course for correction and rectification and in case of repetition he will be warned in writing "

The position seems to be somewhat different in Government Companies. Even comparatively small establishments have formal reporting procedures, reporting periodicity being

in some cases as frequent as twice every year for all categories, This is in spite of immediate contact with employees being possible and perhaps the fact.

A formal reporting procedure analytically becomes necessary when it is not possible for the person in authority who determines the promotion of any employee to be in fairly close and personal touch with the performance of the employee. It is also necessary when there is a counselling programme for employees, the counsellor being a person different from the immediate superior of the employee concerned. A third condition is where, as a result of the history of disputes regarding promotions, it has to be ensured that promotions will stand the scrutiny of Tribunals, and in line with the old saying that "Justice should not only be done but must be seen to be done" the management's opinion should be substantiated by records¹.

It is perhaps the last consideration which has weighed with the Government Companies. Tribunals in Kerala often apply the yardstick of practice adopted by Government in judging disputes regarding promotions in Government Companies; in fact many of the arguments raised by Unions of Government Companies before Tribunals have been based upon the need for extending Governmental practices to Government Companies also.

The fact that Government Officers drawn from administrative departments of Government have been put in charge of most of the Government Companies, has also influenced the formalisation of reporting procedures in these Companies. This is because the top executive is a bird of passage and has very little knowledge of individual employees but since he has to decide on promotions he often extends Government procedures with which he is conversant, to the Companies' working².

¹For a discussion of this aspect, please see Bala, M.S. : "Promotion as a Management Right", *CAPITAL* (Calcutta 30th March, 1967) Vol. CL VII 3954, P. 633 *et seq.*

²Cf., Glenn Stahl, O. : "Of Jobs & Men". *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, New Delhi, Vol. XIV No. 2 April-June 1968, Pp. 2622-63.

3. **Items of Appraisal:** An analysis of the items featuring in 25 reporting forms arranged in the order of frequency of occurrence in merit-rating, is given in the Table below :—

TABLE I
ITEMS OF PERSONNEL APPRAISALS³

Items Rated	Number of times found in 12 merit-rating forms of Private Sector Companies	No. of times found in 13 merit-rating forms of Govt. Companies	Total in 25 forms of all Companies
Knowledge of job	10	10	20
Initiative	8	9	17
Leadership	4	8	12
Attendance	6	6	12
Dependability	6	6	12
Attitude	4	7	11
Co-operativeness	4	5	9
Intelligence	2	4	6
Quality of work	4	2	6
Health	4	2	6
Quantity of work	3	1	4
Industry	1	2	3
Judgment	1	2	3
Conduct	1	2	3
Safety habits	—	2	2
Personality	—	2	2
Application	2	—	2
Potential	2	—	2
Accuracy	1	1	2
Adaptability	1	—	1
Neatness	—	1	1
Appearance	1	—	1

It is interesting that "knowledge of job" features highest in both sectors. "Leadership" is more emphasised in Government Companies, while "Quantity of work" seems to be almost a matter of indifference. "Attitude" is much more important

³This table has been modelled on the one in Yoder, Dale : 'Personnel Management & Industrial Relations'—Fifth Edition (Pitman, London, Reprint 1966) p. 362.

in Government Companies than in the Private Sector. Government Companies do not seem to be at all worried about "Appearance", "Adaptability", "Potential" and "Application"

A few Companies have included integrity, efficiency, amenability to discipline, mental ability etc., in their forms. For the purpose of Table-I, these characteristics have been interpreted as synonyms of one or another of the characteristics listed in the Table.

Most of the Companies use different forms of merit-rating for different categories of employees. This differentiation is more pronounced in the case of Private Sector Companies. In most cases, instructions to the Reporting Authority are incorporated in the form itself. In the case of one Company (Private Sector) elaborate instructions including the Company's philosophy on evaluation of employees' performance have been issued as a separate book. In most cases, particularly in respect of Government Companies, the reporting officer has been cautioned to give an accurate and fair appraisal and be on guard against personal bias. In one case, the following caution occurs :—

"Remember that your opinions are also used as a measure of your judgement."

4. Form of Report : Considerable variation has been noticed in the form of report. A very popular form is the 'graphic rating scale'. In some cases, this has been reinforced with descriptive phrases (e.g. in a Government Company)

Dependability. Consider working habits. Is work completed in time? Do you have to follow up	Must be worked with closely. Expln.	Needs super-vision; conscientious	Reliable; some super- vision need	Applies himself well. Only occasional supervision	Justifies complete confidence No super-vision
—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—

In some other cases, indices have been linked with a scale of marks. Maximum marks have been allotted to each factor (e.g. in a Government Company)

	Maximum Marks	Marks Assessed	Remarks
(a) Knowledge of work	10		
(b) Aptitude for the job	16		
Dependability			
Reaction to emergencies			
Accident proneness			
—	—	—	—

Deduction for warning or "absence notice" is made from the total obtained and the result is the 'actual marks' obtained.

A more sophisticated variant is to give a scale of marks associated with ranking against particular characteristics (e.g. in a Private Sector Company)

JOB EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE	15	13	10	8	3 Below Average	0
Good			Average			
—	—	—	—	—	—	—

It is interesting to note that specific comment on "potential" features only in the forms adopted in one Private Sector Company. I presume that most of the other managements consider that the reporting on potential is implied in the general ranking given.

In most cases, evaluation is done by the immediate superior of the person reported on. However, the report passes through the next higher level before it is finalised. In the larger Government Companies there is an Assessment Committee which scrutinises the reports before deciding the ranking.

Government Companies seem to be more aware of the possibility of the "Halo Effect", and try to overcome this by specifically instructing the rater to consider only one quality at a time. The following instructions from a Public sector Company are interesting enough to be extracted in full.

“WATCH OUT FOR THESE”

“Personal likes and dislikes can influence people's rating of others. May be you are a person who is very fond of punctuality and naturally fond of one who is punctual. He may get a high rating on practically every factor, though many factors have little to do with punctuality. Here you are being influenced by the “Halo Effect”. It is with a view to minimise this error that two raters are asked to rate the same man.

Tests have shown that the correlation between ratings of an individual on different factors is higher than the actual relationship between the job functions. In effect, it means that it is quite possible for an individual to rate very high in one factor and very low in another. This is one of the reasons why you are asked to rate all on one factor before moving on to the next factor. This will also help in fighting against that ‘Halo Effect’ we were talking of”

In general, Government Companies seem to adopt a formal reporting system as an article of faith. The reporting in some cases is of a purely narrative character and no effort is made to refine it in any quantitative sense. In the case of Private Sector Companies, formal reporting seems to be adopted only where the Company is so large that the report-receivers' personal knowledge of the employee reported upon is meagre. The Private Sector Companies which do adopt formal reporting systems go in for fairly sophisticated procedures.

Perhaps one explanation for this difference may be that in the Government Companies, reporting is intended more to safeguard individual employees from arbitrary rejection, than to ensure that the Company gets the right man in the right place. The Private Sector Companies subordinate this aspect to the Companies' interest.

5. Communication of the reports:- In most of the Government Companies the practice is that adverse remarks are invariably communicated to the concerned employee. The employee can submit his protest against such entries to the authority next higher to the reporting authority. In some Private Sector Companies it has been stipulated that the gist of the report, presumably including also the good remarks, will be communicated to the concerned employee.

None of the Companies surveyed seems to be using the report for a formal or informal counselling of the employee. Nor has it been always possible in practice particularly in the

Government Companies to shift an employee from a superior who has consistently been giving him adverse report. However, in most Government Companies space has been provided to record employees' efforts towards correcting adverse aspects reported upon during past periods.

6. **Uses to which report has been put:-** It has not been possible for lack of time to conduct a detailed survey of the exact uses to which the reports have been put. The general observation is that they have been used mainly for determining promotability. In some Companies, particularly in the Private Sector seniority can be overlooked solely because a junior has a better record of confidential reports. In some Private Sector Companies the reports is also used to determine the quantum of annual increments and emoluments of the employee concerned. In Government Companies, however, increments seem to be earned as a matter of course and can be stopped only as a result of a definite disciplinary action. No instance has yet come to my notice of increments in Government Companies having been postponed or altered merely because of adverse remarks in the Confidential Reports.

In one Government Company confidential reports form only one of the various items taken into consideration for deciding promotability. This Company uses the same report from, which is of the "graphic rating scale reinforced with descriptive phrases" type, to all categories of employee, including managerial level personnel. But it employs an elaborate marking system under which weightages have been given differently to the confidential reports according to the category of employee concerned. Age, seniority, educational qualifications and attendance are some of the other factors for which separate weightages have been attached. For an employee in the lower category the weightage attached to adverse remarks is less in comparison to his total performance record. Progressively higher weightages have been given to the reports for the higher categories. It may be mentioned that this procedure has had the approval of a number of third party experts including a Board of Arbitrators.

7. **Critique:-** It has not been possible in the limited time available to assess in detail employees' and managers' reactions to the appraisal methods used in their respective Companies. In general, however, neither employees nor managers are fully satisfied with any appraisal system whatever and seem generally to recognise that these systems are at best only a compromise between the extreme alternatives of preference by seniority in service on the one hand and the Manager's arbitrary preference on the other.

Most Managers feel embarrassed in honestly recording their appraisals of their subordinates. This is particularly the case in Government Companies where the Manager is a bird of passage and is reluctant to create more enemies than he needs to. The fact that adverse remarks have to be communicated to the employee who will certainly put in a grievance petition protesting against them thus making it necessary for the Manager to substantiate his assessment makes it all the more popular with the Manager to write non-committal remarks. In one Government Company to which I have had access, I found that, merely on the basis of the Confidential Reports, there was hardly anything to determine choice from among various officers of acknowledgedly differing ability. The conclusion is therefore obvious that the Confidential Reports in this Company provide no basis whatever for a selection which proceeds invariably on the basis of seniority and educational qualifications. The very essence of the appraisal system is lost in such Companies. Even a sophisticated form including ranking or ordering techniques enforcing a spread in evaluations does not solve the problem because of the wild concentration of marking in the middle range.

A second difficulty is the variations in standard adopted by different Managers heading different sections. While one may play for popularity and give uniformly high ranking another may be more critical. In promotions to which candidates from various sections have necessarily to be considered, the correction of these variations becomes a case of almost arbitrary choice. This is particularly witnessed in the Government Companies where the top Manager may not have had enough familiarity with the attitudes towards reporting adopted by the various Managers under him.

The employees' reaction towards the appraisal system has been uniformly one of protest. A confidential report base as a means of deciding promotability has generally been objected to as an unfair stab on the back of the aggrieved employee. In the Government Company I had already mentioned above, this has been sought to be minimised by combining varying weightage of appraisal reports with other more objective and publicly assessable standards of judgment eg. trade test, competitive test, interviews, etc., for every promotion.

In some large Government Companies there is a Assessment Committee which goes into the confidential reports before rankings are finalised. This system has the advantage of correcting for the tendency to concentrate on the average and for inter-departmental difference in standards adopted.

SUMMARY

This survey of practices in regard to appraisal of employees' performances in Government and Private Sector Companies has been, perforce, limited by the time available and in the sense that is with particular reference to conditions in Kerala.

While Government Companies adopt formal reporting procedures almost as an article of faith irrespective of the size of the Company. Private Sector Managements try avoid such formal systems as far as possible. Only very large Private Sector Companies attempt it, and they reach a higher degree of sophistication than the Government Companies.

In Government Companies the reports are used mostly to decide on promotability. In Private Sector Companies they also serve as the basis for deciding increments and emoluments.

No serious effort seems to have been made by either sector for using the reports for counselling employees.

The basic defects of the system noted in the theoretical literature on the subject have been found true in actual practice. The major defects are:-

- (a) The "Halo" effect, in spite of instructions, is not fully nullified;
- (b) Managers tend to take the easy way of over emphasising the average;
- (c) Inter-departmental and inter-personal differences in ranking standards within the same Company have not been fully neutralised;
- (d) Neither Managers nor employees are fully satisfied with the system.

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EMPLOYEES' ASSESSMENT—PRINCIPLE & PRACTICES

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru vigorously advocated the view that the rule of seniority among services should be "tempered with merit" and at the highest status "merit alone should count". These remarks were made in his keen desire to make the Government operate more efficiently. This is basically a problem of utilising people more effectively which is obviously dependant on how well people are managed.

The quality of Management has, and is undergoing a change in our country. With the introduction of professional management, more and more thought, time and money are being spent on how best to adapt and adopt some of the modern methods and practices that have developed to improve management efficiency. This basically involves maximum utilization of its resources namely men, material and capital. The proper utilization of these resources can only be achieved through people in the organization. It therefore follows that individuals who are concerned in the running of an enterprise, must be understood as individuals, so that they are developed and utilized to the best advantage of the organization. It is in this context that the technique of employees assessment is being utilized by various concerns.

There are no set methods that are being applied in the Private Sector. Each organization, I imagine, has developed its own system to suit its needs and objectives. There are some organizations with somewhat negative approach who apply the system mainly to ensure that each individual maintains a certain performance level. In other words, review is essentially made to check on individuals so that action is taken on those who are falling back on their performance. In some cases, this procedure has also been utilized to award salary increments and promotions. This is a very limited use of the technique and it does not achieve the basic purpose of assessing employees.

Some of the progressive concerns have accepted the fact that the prosperity and growth of an organization depends on the people it employs. As a policy, such Companies have recognized the great importance of its employees and their contribution to the organization, and accordingly, they have been making conscious efforts not only to understand the science of human behaviour and modern methods but are also trying to learn and develop the art of effectively harmonizing these so that people contribute their efforts more effectively and profitably.

Works of men like Peter Doucker, Douglas McGregor, and Frederic Herzberg have had quite an impact on Indian Management. Professional Managers of today are beginning to realise that there is a positive need to generate the desired climate for individuals to develop and have their own aspirations in tune with their organizations' objectives. This realisation has led modern management to revise their entire thinking and approach to the important function of managing people. It has also enabled professional Managers to have a better appreciation of an individual's reaction to his work situation.

"Work" (job) can be regarded as a combination of factors, some relating to the context of the job and others to the content of the job.

The 'content' factor includes remuneration, physical working conditions, organizational policy and administrative method and the whole area of what is generally termed as "Human Relation". It is essential that these matters are given their due attention because when these are poor they tend to create dissatisfaction and low job performance. It is, however, to be appreciated that the removal of these "dissatisfiers" does not necessarily create positive satisfaction or high job performance.

It is the, 'content' factor which is crucial, for it positively motivates people to high job performance. These factors are generally identified as work itself, responsibility, achievement, advancement and recognition. Studies have shown that the first two are the most important factors. Thus to develop and motivate individuals, Management must concern itself with all aspects of an individual's job with the aim of ensuring that as far as possible, each individual is able to make the maximum use of his mental, emotional and physical aspirations. Similarly, a searching examination is required to be made to provide scope for the individual to make decisions on his own, and, for which he is also personally accountable. The other factors mentioned above also need to be examined as in this context they too merit consideration. It follows therefore that an individual in his work situation has to be known and understood. To achieve the task of knowing facts about him and his work situation, information has to be collected in a systematic and logical manner. The employee's assessment procedure is, therefore, essentially to elicit certain aspects of this information.

Thus the most important purpose of the assessment procedure is to help the senior in his study of individuals' performance and then to identify developments and training needs and take action accordingly.

It is necessary to mention here that in our anxiety to progress fast and catch up with lost time, there has been a tremendous upsurge in the area of Management Development and Training. We have today, many institutions offering training course and several organizations have developed their own training institutions. I get the impression from this trend that in many instances it has become fashionable to depute individuals to training courses, whether or not these individuals need it. There is, therefore, a need to re-evaluate the concept of training and development.

Individuals working in an organization continue "to develop" and the quality of this development is dependent on the organization's "culture". This is a continuous activity largely controlled by the manner in which the organization operates. An individual, in a given situation, attains the highest level he is capable of reaching mainly through his own efforts in co-operation with his own seniors. The question therefore is not whether an individual will develop but how he will develop. Obviously, the main responsibility for development lies with an individual himself in his work situation but the rate and scope of self-development depends largely on the plan, help and guidance of his seniors. A well planned and systematized assessment procedure assists the senior to help and guide the individual. In this context, training facilities that are being provided should be utilized to fulfil a *need* and we should avoid deputing people merely because we think it is the done thing.

Information collected through the assessment procedure serves other purposes as well. These in brief are as follows :

1. To help seniors to have a more personal knowledge of their men and to know their weaknesses and strengths quickly and objectively.
2. To enable top management to know the possible men who can be considered as potential material for higher jobs and to plan their development and training accordingly.
3. To provide the requisite information for overall man-power planning to review the organization's norms for recruitment at various levels.

Thus, the aim of the assessment procedure is essentially practical but to be of any value, the recording must be true and fair and done as objectively as possible.

Individuals are naturally assessed for the job they are expected to perform and as the nature of job varies at different levels, it is not feasible to have one common system for all employees. In an organization, the jobs range from unskilled work to various levels of management. To appreciate the performance of individuals at various levels, the procedure should be sufficiently flexible to meet the purposes as indicated above. In the case of Managerial Staff, normally attempt is made to assess the performance against qualities that are considered essential for a person to be an effective manager. This requires a detailed study of the men and such a study may not be necessary at a lower level where the purpose may be served by assessing employees under specific factors.

I am not in a position to speak to what extent the current practices in the Private Sector have achieved the purposes for which assessment is carried out, but I should imagine several of the progressive firms have adopted methods similar to Vazir Sultan's practices. I therefore feel that it will serve the purpose of this paper if I confine myself to Vazir's methods for assessing employees.

The procedure and forms designed for the Management Staff and workmen are different. We are now engaged in designing a separate form for the Senior Supervisors referred to as 'Link Management'. In the case of Management Staff, Vazir has a simple form which is required to be completed once a year. It gives information regarding the employees' qualities and general characteristics. There are five main headings, namely, executive ability, personal qualities, leadership, mental qualities and administrative ability. These terms can mean different things to different people and to give specific meaning, they have been subdivided under various attributes associated with the general characteristics. For example, the Executive Ability is divided into four attributes namely :

- (i) General ability in department
- (ii) Initiative
- (iii) Reliability
- (iv) Industry.

Experience has shown that managers assessing the performance express it differently. One manager may tend to be fairly free with superlatives while another may be very careful even to use the word "good". This cannot be completely eliminated but to minimize the danger, each attribute has five

appropriately described gradings. For example against the attribute "Initiative" the five gradings are as under :

1. "Exceptionally resourceful. Always ready to act on own initiative."
2. "Show initiative in thought and action. Strong sense of responsibility."
3. "Can generally be relied upon to act on own responsibility,"
4. "Will act on his own, though apt to seek advice unnecessarily."
5. "Diffident in action. Leans too heavily on guidance of others."

The Manager is advised that each general characteristic should be completed in turn and all he had to do is to tick off the appropriate numerical grading for each attribute. He is also required to obtain an average of the five attributes mentioned against each characteristic and this then indicates the overall assessment against each characteristic. For all practical purposes, the five gradings can represent stages of performance ranging from "poor" to "excellent". Thus, the average figure of "3" would represent a normal average performance, and the figures under the five gradings would show up strengths and weaknesses.

These particulars give general information regarding the individual. Additional space in the form is provided to remark on any characteristic or attribute possessed or lacked to marked degree. In this space the assessor is also asked to mention other qualities about the individual that may be of value in either his career planning or developing and training him to bring out his strengths and to eliminate his weaknesses so that he performs the job more efficiently.

It was stated earlier that the assessment should be done objectively but the fact remains that all of us have personal prejudices which take a variety of forms. It is therefore important for the assessor to be conscious of this fact so that he makes an honest effort to identify his own prejudices and allow for them when he assesses his men. The important thing to remember is that the "whole man" and not just parts of him should be considered. An attempt is made to ensure this by the manner in which the form is completed. Further,

generally more than one person assess an individual so that the effect of personal prejudices is minimized. Attempt is also made to avoid perpetuation of these prejudices by ensuring that an assessor has no access to the previous reports.

The Company requires the assessor to inform the assessee concerned about his report. This is a problem of communication. Unless the assessment is fully appreciated and understood by the assessee, the report would tend to have little or no purpose. Some of the managers have therefore asked their men to complete the form based on their own knowledge of how they have performed, and the managers in turn have also completed the forms on how they assess their men. They have then compared the reports and discussed and thrashed out the differences. This procedure is worth trying. It is in tune with Blake's Managerial Grid concept of "9, 9" managerial style in which there is high concern for "production" coupled with higher concern for "people". In this connection, McGregor's book "The Human Side of Enterprise" is commended—Chapter 6 of the book entitled "A Critique of Performers' Appraisal" is worth reading.

Vazir's procedure in the context of modern thinking on this subject is by no means perfect. It must be accepted that there is scope for improvement. It is, however, not suggested that changes are made merely because of some of the Western social scientists have propounded certain concepts. Sometimes, it may be necessary to reorientate these ideas to achieve the organizations business objectives and goals. It is on this assumption that Vazir's procedure of assessment of Management Staff has been described. It is likely that some of the other concerns have more purposeful procedures. The thing to remember is that the aim is essentially practical and organizations should, therefore, be reasonably flexible to change and amend their procedures to fulfil their real needs.

In the case of workers, assessment is sometimes referred to as 'Merit Rating'. Not many firms appear to have adopted any systematic procedure. There are however, various devices to consider the merit of workers particularly when there promotions are being considered. At Vazir, an attempt has been made to have a systematic procedure to achieve some of the objectives mentioned earlier. From the very initial stages, Management adopted the "Factor Assessment Method". This method provides for workers to be assessed under various factors namely, 'mental ability', 'Job skill knowledge', 'responsibility', 'physical effort', 'co-operation' and 'supervision'. It has, however, been found that results are just as valid and

reliable and a considerable saving in time is achieved if workmen below a certain level are assessed on two factors only, namely, ability (mental and job skill) and the application of ability to work.

This technique basically follows the same method as was adopted by the Company for Job Evaluation. In Job Evaluation, jobs for various factors are compared against one another and in merit rating, employees doing the same jobs are compared against one another under similar factors to ascertain their relative performance position.

Assessment is done twice in a year with a review for sub-standard workmen every quarter. As far as possible, at least two Members of Management, with the assistance of appropriate supervisory staff, assess the workmen. Detailed reasons are recorded when a workman is assessed at a level which does not qualify him for promotion. The workman concerned is advised of these reasons so that he may help himself to overcome his shortcomings. All ratings are subject to review by a committee.

For those interested in the details of the procedure, a copy of Vazir's booklet on "Assessment of Workers' Performance" is attached.

The technique has been found to be of great value in determining the Company's policy towards the management of individuals. The very nature of this technique helps the "Supervisors" to know their workers strengths and weaknesses quickly and objectively. It is not a question of just knowing the 'bad boys' and the 'good boys'. It also gives an insight into a very large number of workmen who are generally overlooked because of their average performance. In short, it helps "Supervisors" to have a more personal knowledge of their men. This technique also helps Top Management to know the quality of supervision and management at the floor level. It is the "Supervisors" who basically do the merit rating and the manner in which merit rating is conducted assists top managers to assess how well "Supervisors" know their men and how alive they are to the problems concerning their men—there is a tendency in production organization to devote a considerable amount of time to the efficient working of machines and utilization of capital and as far as workmen are concerned, if they do not do their jobs well, the "Supervisors" tend to blame them for their shortcomings. Merit rating helps them to appreciate their responsibilities of knowing them personally and of improving their performance.

Merit Rating also enables the Company to formulate its training and promotion policy on a fair and rational basis. This is an important outcome of the merit rating technique in that the training programmes and promotion procedures become realistic and thus raise the overall performance level.

Vazir, in keeping with its personnel policy, had associated the recognized Trade Union in the introduction of Job Evaluation and Merit Rating techniques. In 1965, an agreement was incorporated in the Long Term Memorandum of Settlement. Experience and results have shown that this was an important agreement. Those who are having to face the problem of considering merit as against seniority at the time of promotion and are confronted with trade unions insistence on seniority, may be interested to study the Agreement. For them, a copy of the settlement has been provided—Annexure XII to the settlement covers the agreement on merit rating.

It should be emphasized here that in applying any technique which affects workmen, it is not enough for the Management to be fair and just, but they must, in their actions make it evident. Accordingly, at Vazir, the senior executives of the Trade Union are taken into confidence and are shown the results. Further, they are associated in the process of applying merit rating to promotional procedure.

In this exercise it is important for the employees concerned to have faith and confidence in the application of this technique. But because of possible human error in assessment, the employees can easily lose faith in the technique and can have all kinds of allegations. The possible effect of human error could, to some extent, be minimized by training the "Supervisors" in the art of assessing their employees. At Vazir, the results of merit rating were not utilized till such time the Management was reasonably satisfied that those were fair and just. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons for the Trade Union to have accepted the principles of merit rating and its application to the Company's promotional policy.

Another reason for the technique to have worked reasonably satisfactorily is that the method of factorwise comparison of workers' performance reduces the chances of human error. Even if there are any allegations regarding unfairness by the Trade Union executives, these are thrashed out at the level of the review committee with which the senior Trade Union executives are associated. In any case, it gives an opportunity to both sides to establish good faith in industrial relations which can be of great help in applying the merit rating scheme.

Assessment of workers' performance, if properly and systematically done, is a time consuming exercise. A genuine practical difficulty is for Line Managers—in addition to the normal run of their duties—to find time for this purpose. But as long as these difficulties are known, they can be overcome provided two essential factors are present :

Firstly, an atmosphere of good faith, and secondly, genuine conviction of the efficacy of this technique.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN GENERAL AND THE E.I.D. - PARRY GROUP OF COMPANIES IN PARTICULAR

By Thiru C. J. FERNANDEY

INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding to the main topic, it would be desirable to give a very brief picture of the E.I.D.-Parry Group, so that its procedures and methods are viewed in the correct perspective.

The E.I.D.-Parry Group includes all Companies managed by Parry & Company Limited, which is itself a subsidiary of E.I.D.-Parry Limited.

Parry & Company Limited, was founded at Madras early in 1778 by Thomas Parry, a young Welsh man who had just arrived in the country. It is the oldest Mercantile House in South India.

Initially the Firm was nominally that of General Traders and Agents, but the main business consisted of Banking. Over the years, the Firm's activities underwent many changes, ranging from Ship Owners to Indigo Manufactures, and today while in the main the Company engages in Agency business, it also manages the following Companies.

The Deccan Sugar & Abkhari Co. Ltd.
The Travancore Sugars & Chemicals Ltd.
Parrys Confectionery Ltd.

It acts as Secretaries and Treasurers for :

The Cauvery Sugars & Chemicals Ltd.

and is the holding company of :

The Mofussil Warehouse & Trading Co. Ltd.
Parry & Company Limited, itself is a subsidiary of E.I.D.-Parry Ltd. The other Companies in the E.I.D.-Parry Group are :

Andhra Fertilisers Private Ltd.
Parry Murray & Co. Ltd., London.
Herdillia Chemicals Ltd., (which is managed by E.I.D.-Parry)

On the manufacturing side the Group's activities include Fertilisers, Sugar, Ceramics, Chemicals, Confectionery, Liquors, Spirits and Co2, Engineering goods and Petrochemicals.

A distribution net work covers Engineering equipment, industrial raw materials, quality sweets, Pharmaceuticals, Spirit and Co2, Essences and consumer goods such as Biscuits, Milk Foods, Household Food Products, Floor, Boot and Furniture Polishes, etc.

Shipping at Cuddalore, Madras and other ports is another noteworthy activity.

The Company's Head Office is at Madras. It has main branches at :

Bombay
Bangalore
Calcutta
Cochin
Cuddalore
Coimbatore
Delhi
Madurai
Ootacamund
Secunderabad

and sub-branches at various places in South India.

Its main Factories are :

Nellikuppam	- Sugar, Confectionery, Spirit, Co2.
Ranipet	- Ceramics, Fertiliser/Chemicals Insecticides/Fungicides.
Ennore	- Fertiliser.
Tadepalli	- Fertiliser & Fertiliser Mixtures
Samalkot	- Sugar, Spirit, Co2.
Pugalur	- Sugar.
Pettaivaytalai	- Sugar.
Tiruvala	- Sugar, Spirit & Liquors.
Herdillia	- Petrochemicals.

In addition there are about 20 Fertiliser Mixing Works, mainly in South India.

The Group employs a work force of approximately 11,500 persons.

It is found essential that there should be a proper assessment of the performance of its employees so that the following among other managerial functions may be served :

1. Guiding employee development
2. Aiding in decisions with regard to salary increase, promotion, demotion and discharge.
3. Aiding in assessing present personnel strength and in planning manpower needs for the future.

In the U.S.A. and Great Britain, traditional approaches have often been directed at serving all of these needs, and sometimes others as well, by a single, top-down rating of employee performance in terms of factors such as the following:

Accuracy
 Judgement
 Dependability
 Co-operativeness
 Creative ability
 Loyalty
 Ability to deal effectively with others
 Resourcefulness
 Productiveness.

Various rating methods have been employed—man-to-man comparisons, rating scales, rating lists, and others. Most widely used is probably the rating scale, made up of factors deemed to be most significant in performance on the job. This is known as merit rating. In theory it is an all important management tool. It is meant to tell you whether an employee should be promoted, trained, transferred, given a raise or fired.

The immediate supervisor usually makes the rating without help, although many plans now require him to explain and justify his rating to his superior or, in some cases, to a small committee of other persons familiar with the performance of the employee. The latter course unquestionably results in greater care in making and justifying ratings, if conscientiously administered.

Perhaps the most significant and promising trend at present is the practice of having the person being rated take a more active and responsible role in the entire process. Rather than depend upon a top-down rating, many plans now have the

employee do careful self-appraisal and, in some cases, lay out goals and plans for his own development during the period ahead. A typical approach abroad, subject to numerous variations, is use of a form consisting of such headings as the following, with ample space under each heading :

Breadth of knowledge

What I hope to accomplish during the coming year

How I plan to go about it (specific steps)

How higher management might help

While the employee is thinking through the self-appraisal and development planning appraisal, his supervisor may go through much the same process. Then the two discuss the appraisal together and reach a "meeting of the minds"—but with the employee assuming primary responsibility. He should be encouraged to think about the needs of the job and his own goals, which can best be met through contributing more to the organisation.

This sort of approach to appraisal—concentrating upon development of the individual—seems to work best if separated entirely from salary consideration, which is therefore carried out at a different time. Otherwise preoccupation with salaries is likely to mean loss of much of the value of constructive appraisal and planning for development

Key reasons why may appraisal plans are being slanted in the direction just indicated are : the more favourable psychological climate created; the constructive, forward-looking nature of the process; the greater probability of agreement and genuine commitment by the employee to carrying out development plans he has helped to evolve.

Some organisations have tried subordinate appraisals. The reasoning behind this is that if a man has subordinates, they are in the best positions to know just how well he performs as their supervisor.

At best, the formal evaluation of one human being by another is bound to be affected to some degree by bias. And when it comes to peer ratings and especially ratings by subordinates, these prejudices often run wild.

Bias aside, the appraisal system may suffer from other common flaws. Among them :

Lack of top management support. Many supervisors do not like to evaluate other people. And when they know that top management gives the programme lip service only, they find it easier to ignore it.

Lack of emphasis on advantages. Benefits that are supposed to result from appraisal systems include improved performance employee development and better utilisation of manpower. Unfortunately, these benefits for supervisors are not usually stressed. Instead, mechanics of the appraisal system-procedures and forms-are emphasized.

No reward. Unless a supervisor is recognised and rewarded for helping an employee develop through performance appraisals, he has little incentive for spending time and effort on them.

Inadequate training. To become skilled at fairly evaluating a subordinate's performance requires considerable training and practice. Strangely, many organisations feel that supervisors can pick this skill up-not through training, but simply by reading a company manual.

A few progressive corporations are experimenting with automated manpower inventory systems. These are intended to make it easy to locate the right employee for the right job. Employees capable of filling a vacancy are identified from data fed into a computerised memory system.

THE GHOST OF FAILURES PAST

But even here there is a controversial question. Namely, how important a part should past performance play in filling the job? The quality of performance is subject to change. A man performing well today may, in fact, be haunted by a single poor record of performance that is still filed or remembered even though it was made years ago.

If performance appraisal has not proved the answer to a healthy employee development programme, what will? To answer that question, we must first make certain what we want performance appraisal to achieve.

In general, the objectives include:

Better use of existing manpower.

Improved performance on the job.

Periodic feedback to let the employee know how he is doing.

The answer is not to forget performance appraisal, but to improve timing.

Have a frank talk with an employee about his shortcomings but only when the Short comings occur. Discuss—his achievement of goals - but when the achievement occurs Ideas for his development should be discussed when you have those ideas - or when he does.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING JOB PERFORMANCE IN OFFICES

Criteria for evaluating performance in office jobs vary with the different groups. In clerical work, including statistics, coding, and filing; in the operation of card-punch, book-keeping, computing, and other office machines where the operator sets the pace; and in typing and routine stenographic work, quantity and quality of output are the fundamental criteria, while dependability, co-operativeness and ability to learn new methods and procedures are secondary. In other jobs, such as those of the secretary and the receptionist, these latter factors - especially dependability and co-operativeness - are important also, as are initiative, proper attitudes, and the ability to get along with people.

QUALTIES TO BE MEASURED :

In addition to the obvious factors of specific skills and clerical speed and accuracy, there are a number of qualities that it would seem important to measure in the office field.

Willingness to accept responsibility is an important factor which, differentiates the secretary and the supervisor/Head-Clerk, from the clerk, the typist, and the stenographer. Probably related to the desire for responsibility are self-confidence and ambition,

FACTORS IN SUPERVISORY PERFORMANCE :

Over and above the production record of the unit, the following seem to be the most important specific factors in measuring performance in supervisory positions in the office field.

A. Administration : The successful supervisor-

1. Gives clear instructions.
2. Is good at training his employees.
3. Schedules and plans his work.
4. Makes good decisions.

B. Leadership : The successful supervisor-

1. Sets a good example for his employees.
2. Encourages his employees to do a better job.
3. Lets his employees know how they are doing
4. Is good at judging people.
5. Is respected and liked by his employees.
6. Can always be depended on to be honest in what he says.

The above is in respect of office jobs and with suitable adjustments could also be applied to various jobs in the factory or elsewhere.

As far as the E. I. D. Parry Group is concerned the following procedure are currently in vogue :

(A) **Management Staff** : Each year an annual report is prepared by the Manager of the concerned Department, Branch, or Factory, on the individual's performance during the year. This is based on the Manager's personal observation of the individual. In case the individual is directly employed under any other senior officer, such Senior officer's opinion is also taken into account before preparing the staff Annual Report. Apart from detailing the name of the person, his grade, designation, service and age with a brief note on the appointment held by him, the Manager has to describe in fullest terms his estimate of the personal qualities and capabilities of the person concerned with special reference to the following :

- (a) Reliability, judgement, adaptability and ability to organise, supervise and co-operate with others.
- (b) Whether increased or special responsibilities have been undertaken or not.
- (c) Immediate eligibility for promotion.

- (d) Long term prospects i. e. the grade which he is likely to reach.
- (e) Health, intelligence and loyalty.
- (f) Domestic and Social background.
- (g) Whether any special training recommended.

In the case of Management Trainees, a quarterly report is prepared in the prescribed form, a copy of which is attached, marked Annexure 'A'. The main factors taken into account are briefly :-

- Aptitude
- Initiative
- Ability to grasp and follow instructions
- Organising/Supervising abilities
- Dependability
- Punctuality
- Health
- Progress since previous assessment

(B) Staff: In the case of office employees of non Management cadre, the Manager concerned makes an entry in the service record of the individual concerned at the end of each year, which gives a brief report on his performance during the year. This is done after discussion with the Departmental/Section Head.

In addition, the employees other than subordinate staff are merit rated once a year by the Assistant Manager concerned. The Manager will then do an 'Overall Rating'. A copy of the Merit Rating Form in use is attached marked Annexure 'B'

The following factors will be rated by the Assistant directly responsible for the staff :

- A. Knowledge of job.
- B. Ability.
- C. Dependability.
- D. Speed of performance
- E. Initiative.
- F. Co-operation.
- G. Mistakes.
- H. Enthusiasm.

- (a) Knowledge of English written-spoken.
- (b) Attendance.
- (c) Responsibility

In rating the above, the Assistant will give specific instances to support his judgment, where necessary.

The rating will be done by ticking the appropriate section in the relevant squares.

Section (a) Knowledge of English :

The column "written" will not be rated in the case of lower grade staff

Section (c) Responsibility :

This will be applicable only to Senior clerks and Section Heads.

The Assistant Manager concerned will make his recommendation in regard to the employee's capacity for increased responsibility, future developments, alternative postings and such other comments as necessary. Please refer to the reverse of the merit rating form.

On completion of the rating table etc., the Assistant Manager rating will compute the Marks Tally, based on the 'Mark Table' as follows :

Section	1	5 marks
,,	2	4 marks
,,	3	3 marks
,,	4	2 marks
,,	5	1 mark

Marks on the same scale as indicated above will be given for Section (a), (b) and (c) on Page 2 of the merit rating form; for example, under section (a)-Knowledge of English Written, 5 marks will be awarded for 'excellent' and 1 mark for 'bad'. Similar scale of marks will apply to knowledge of English-Spoken.

In regard to speed of performance, under section (1), (3) and (4), a deduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ mark will be made if the assessment is qualified by sub-section (2) regarding wastage of time.

Maximum marks attainable will be 60 in the above rating exercise.

The completed merit rating forms will be submitted to the Manager of the Department, who will then discuss each form individually with the Assistant concerned.

The Manager will then interview the staff concerned discuss the assessment, without the Assistant concerned being present, and give his assessment in Section I of the Rating Table. In addition, he will enter his comments after interview in the appropriate form field and complete the marks. Tally by adding the marks obtained to the marks as computed by the Assistant.

The table of marks under 'Overall Rating' will be as follows :

Section	1	40 marks
"	2	32 marks
"	3	24 marks
"	4	16 marks
"	5	8 marks

On the basis of total obtained the manager will enter the Grading Group Code.

There will be 4 Grading Groups as follows :

	Senior Clerks	Junior Clerks and writers	Peons
A Plus	90 to 100	85 to 95	80 to 90
A	75 to 90	70 to 84	65 to 80
B	55 to 74	50 to 69	45 to 64
C	54 and below	49 and below	44 and below

In the case of factory employees at the end of each year a brief note is made in the service record of the employee's performance during the year based on the reports from his superiors, from the Supervisor level to the Departmental Head.

Merit rating has not yet been extended to the factory employees, as it is considered that the Supervisory staff require training before they could be expected to undertake a proper merit rating of the employees under their control. Such training is being given to Supervisory Staff and it is expected that merit rating will be extended to the factories also, in the very near future.

In the case of Subordinate Staff and Factory Workers, here also, a brief note is made in their service register of any extraordinary good work performed. Similarly, notes of any reprimands or punishment awarded are entered in the service register. Apart from this in the case of skilled and Semi-skilled personnel Trade Tests are held in some factories, and this is also taken into account for determining an employee's suitability for promotion to the Higher Grade.

While merit rating has its good points it cannot be taken for granted that this is an infallible method of assessing the performances of employees in an Organisation. There is no conclusive proof that merit rating is better than an assessment made by a Departmental Head of his subordinates based on personal observation and/or opinions of the Section Head under whom such employees are directly working.

However, in a large organisation it is just not possible for Departmental Heads to devote sufficient time for this. Also employees generally feel that there is less bias when a proper merit rating is done, than when assessment is made on the basis of the personal opinion of particular Departmental Heads, because in merit rating reasons have to be given for any exceptionally good work or if performance is well below normal, and the employee is aware of the position from time to time, whereas under the other system, generally the Manager's or Departmental Head's opinion is recorded without the employee knowing, how he has been judged.

There is one specific area in which such employees appraisals may serve good ground. There is a marked tendency for individual matters to assume the proportions of an industrial dispute. Such a tendency is doubtless detrimental, both to managerial interest and long term healthy Trade Unionism. It is accepted that healthy Trade Unionism should border on collective matters.

Perhaps, a scientific and acceptable system of employees appraisals may obviate the need for individual matters assuming the magnitude of an industrial dispute.

However, if this is to be the position any appraisal system of employees should be characterised by sincerity and good faith on the part of all concerned.

TRAINees—QUARTERLY REPORT
FOR THE QUARTER ENDING.....19

FACTORY :

BRANCH :

DEPARTMENT :

1. NAME
2. CLASSIFICATION :
3. DATE OF JOINING YOUR
FACTORY/BRANCH/DEPT.

4. DETAILS OF TRAINING UNDERGONE OR
ANY SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT CARRIED OUT
DURING THE QUARTER.
.....
.....

5. YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE TRAINEE'S
CAPABILITIES, TAKING PARTICULAR NOTE OF
HIS APTITUDE, INITIATIVE, ABILITY TO GRASP
AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, ABILITY TO
ORGANIZE/SUPERVISE WORK, DEPENDABILITY,
PUNCTUALITY, HEALTH, ETC.
.....
.....

6. PROGRESS SHOWN OVER THE LAST QUARTER.
.....
.....

7. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONFIRMA-
TION OR EXTENSION OF TRAINING.
.....
.....

8. PROSPECTS OF ABSORBTION IN YOUR FACTORY/
BRANCH/DEPARTMENT ON COMPLETION OF
TRAINING.
.....
.....

DATE :

Signature

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP I OF THE SEMINAR
ON REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES (AUGUST 1968)

By

Thiru H. K. GHAZI, I. A. S.,
Chairman Working Group-I (Revenue and Police)

1. Aetiology of grievances :

A grievance means a ground of complaint. Its redressal would therefore mean setting right or remedying the distress caused or wrong done or damage inflicted. A grievance arises when a need remains unsatisfied for a long time or is only partially satisfied. Thus, every need, though it may give rise to requests and representations would not automatically result in a grievance. The Seminar is about the redressal of public grievance. A public grievance was taken to mean a grievance voiced by a large body of the public or even by individual members of the public. Where a member of the public had a judicial remedy open to him, he could not be said to have a grievance. Thus, private grievances as opposed to public grievances were disregarded and were not discussed by the Working Group.

The Working Group laid emphasis on the redressal of grievances rather than on their origin and classification. It was the unanimous opinion of the Working Group that persons having grievance should have it redressed in the quickest possible time. It was felt that some grievances could be redressed without any change in the existing laws, rules, and procedures while some other grievances required a change in the procedures and even in the organisational set up.

2. Receipt of petitions :

It was felt that; as far as possible, every petitioner should be given an acknowledgment so that he may know that his grievance is being attended to. In important cases particularly, in the Police Department, even interim replies should be given to the petitioner so that he may know that the matter has not been lost sight of. After final disposal he should, of course, be given a reply informing him of the manner in which his grievance has been redressed. If it was impossible to do anything in the matter, even then a reply should be sent explaining the difficulty. It was suggested that in respect of petitions presented in person, acknowledgments should be given on the spot. This would result in greater public satisfaction, not to mention the saving on postage.

Another interesting suggestion was that there should be something like a 'grievance counter' in every office. On Mondays, the Head of the office should sit and receive petitions and on other days, as far as possible, important officers should sit at the counter and receive petitions. It was felt that the petitioner should not be left to himself and that there must be some such counter so that even an illiterate man from the village would know where to go. The present system of grievance days should continue as it did help in the quiet redressal of a number of grievances. It was considered that apart from this, the officers should continue to receive petitions on other days, both in Headquarters and on camp.

3. Channels of representations :

The Working Group noted that a number of grievances were represented by the aggrieved parties themselves. However, in some cases, they took the assistance of other persons including legislators. It was felt that due attention should be paid to all grievances and that the nature of the grievance as such should be the criterion for determining the amount of attention a petition were to receive and not the channel through which the petition was received. All communications received from Legislators should, of course, be acknowledged and the existing orders on the subject strictly enforced. It was suggested that in some office—particularly in the Police offices, a complaints box could be put into which a petitioner could just drop in a petition. It was also suggested that for visitors and petitioners, decent waiting rooms should be built in all important offices.

4. Legislators and representations :

An interesting suggestion was made that Legislators may represent "public" grievances before any officer dealing with the matter. However, if the legislators were sponsoring requests from individual members of the public, they should meet only the District Collector or the District head of the Department and not any of their subordinates. It was felt that if this kind of "code of conduct" were to be evolved and adhered to by the legislators themselves, the general complaint of political interference at various levels of administration would largely disappear.

It was the opinion of the Working Group that no separate machinery was necessary only to deal with grievances and that the work should be done only by the existing set up. Thus, all

officers were grievance officers and there was no need to name any officer as grievance officer.

5. Transmission of petition :

The Working Group was of the opinion that the petition containing a grievance should be made to reach the decision-making level within the shortest possible time. Normally, persons making representations should be advised and encouraged to make representations at appropriate levels where the grievances can be straight away redressed. However, if the grievance did initially go to level lower or higher than the one at which decision has to be taken, the petition should be made to travel with the utmost expedition to the decision making level. It was also considered that, in important cases when petitions are transmitted to lower or higher authorities for disposal, the parties should be informed that the petitions have been sent to a particular officer and they would hear from him.

6. Follow-up :

As regards follow-up, it was considered that apart from the checks and balances prescribed in the various manuals, the officers should lay down a regular time-table for the disposal of most categories of grievances. With experience it should be possible to lay down a fairly accurate time-table for different classes and categories of representations. Thus, on receipt of a representation, it would be possible to inform the petitioner that it would take say, three months to dispose of his case. It was suggested that the petitioner should be told that in case he did not get a reply within this period, he could contact the officer concerned personally if he so felt like. This would result in restoring the confidence of the public in the efficacy of administrative procedures. It would also enable the officer to look into delays and take remedial measures. It was also pointed out that the actual volume of this work would have a bearing on the time taken for disposal as also the quality of the work. Suggestions were therefore made for increasing staff, etc., which will be discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

7. On-the-spot disposal :

The question of on-the-spot disposal of petitions was discussed at some length. It was felt that this system could work if the petitions could be processed earlier and only certain types of petitions were taken up for disposal. The number of villa-

ges being extremely large and the number of petitions being very much larger, this system could not be prescribed as the panacea for all the ills of the administrative system. While conceding that systematic and planned touring and enquiries at the village level would speed up the disposal of certain types of cases, the system had inherent limitations. It was impossible for an officer say a Collector to visit all the villages or for that matter to disposal of all the petitions in a village in a day.

8. Organizational Changes.

Having regard to the volume of work already thrown upon the Revenue Department in the districts, it was suggested by some persons that the question of the bifurcation of the districts the bifurcation of taluks and even of panchayat unions should be seriously examined by Government. Unless the actual volume of work was reduced, it is not possible for the officers concerned to deal with the grievances effectively and quickly. It was also suggested that additional staff should be sanctioned promptly when a case was made out for it. It was particularly stressed that Revenue Divisional Officer should be given Stenographer.

9. A contented bureaucracy :

A suggestion was also made that we should have a contented bureaucracy if we seriously desire that all public grievances should be redressed promptly. Thus, increase in the scales of pay of Government servants and provision of amenities were considered essential to get the best out of Government servants. However, too much emphasis was not laid on these aspects as it was felt that these general questions could be discussed more usefully in the general session.

10. Changes in existing procedures :

It was considered that some grievances required changes in the existing procedures for their prompt redressal. It was suggested that there should be greater delegation of power and decentralisation. These are general questions which are examined by Government from time to time. However, the participants felt that there is need and scope for much greater delegation of power than has been done or even attempted so far. According to them, there is need for immediate examination of the various provisions particularly regarding financial limits for execution of works, the periodicity for the revision of the schedule of rates for contracts. It was considered that there should also be greater flexibility and that relaxation of and deviations from the existing rules should be freely permitted in the interests of prompt execution of work.

11. Loss of initiative by Government Servants :

A number of participants felt that Government servants did not make initiative because there was a widespread belief that if they did take any bold action, they might be let down by their superiors. Apart from political pressure, there were unsympathetic superior officers, a very harsh audit and continuous witch-hunting by the Vigilance Department. The participants felt that all Government servants must be assured full support and maximum protection if they committed bonafide mistakes and that they should be rewarded if they took courage in both hands and did the right thing though it may have been unpalatable to many.

12. Problems relatings to Police :

Certain problems which had a particular bearing on the Police Department were also discussed. It was suggested that there were many cases of silent grievances namely, grievances which the aggrieved party did not have the courage to voice. Such grievances could be mopped up by means of anonymous letters. For this purpose, self-addressed stamped envelopes could be distributed at random in the villages. It was argued that in numerous cases persons complained to the police about non-cognizable matters and felt aggrieved when the police did not take up the investigation. It was therefore suggested that some of the non-cognizable offences which were frequently reported to the police could be made cognizable. It was stated that some of the grievances concerning the police were highly exaggerated or politically motivated and that the public needs to be educated regarding the basic laws and procedures. It was stated on behalf of the police that several grievances arose in the sphere of activity of other departments like the Education Department and the Labour Department and that they became the problem of the police because of non-redressal in concerned departments in the initial stages. The Working Group felt that this was a very general question and that non-redressal of any grievance anywhere could give rise to a law and order problem. It was considered that the Working Group need not go into the genesis of law and order problems in general. The participants felt that most of the grievances which were represented to the police needed immediate attention. They could not wait like some of the grievances in other Departments. It was therefore felt that the legislators might contact even Inspectors of Police as regards individual grievances instead of confining themselves only to Superintendent of Police.

ANNEXURE

Working papers forming basis for discussions.

1. Brief Note on Working papers by Thiru K. Venkataraman, I.A.S., Secretary and Treasurer, Madras Regional Branch, Indian Institute of Public Administration.
2. Working paper on Redressal of Public Grievances with special reference to Agriculture Department by Thiru A. Radhakrishnan, B.Sc. (Agri), Chief Inspector of Fertilisers, Directorate of Agriculture, Madras.
3. Working paper on 'Redressal of Public Grievances' with special reference to the co-operative Department by Thiru S. T. Vaidyalingam, M.A., M.Litt., Deputy Registrar (Consumers Co-operation) Office of the Registrar of Co-op. Societies, Madras.
4. Working paper pertaining to the Department of Industries and Commerce by Thiru S. Sundaram, B.Sc., B.E. (Hons) Regional Deputy Director of Industries and Commerce, Madurai.
5. Working paper on "Redressal of Public Grievances" with special reference to Education Department by Thiru V. T. Titus, Joint Director of School Education (Finance) Office of the Director of School Education, Madras.
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8. Working paper on redressal of grievances in the Police Department by Thiru K.G. Narayanaswami, B.A., Superintendent of Police, Special Armed Police, I Bn., Avadi, Madras.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP II
 OF THE SEMINAR ON 'REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC
 GRIEVANCES (AUGUST 1968)

by

THIRU S. P. AMBROSE, I. A. S.,

Chairman,

Working Group II (Development Departments)

'Public grievances' have a tendency to increase and multiply as progress is achieved in the various sectors of development, in an economy which has scarce or inadequate resources in land, water, power, capital credit, agricultural inputs, raw materials for production and skilled man-power. Many of these grievances, which relate to individual as well as social benefits, do not allow of early redressal on account of the prevailing economic conditions in the country. Such grievances are not discussed in this report. 'Public grievances' in Development Departments is a vast topic, and it has been possible only to cover some of the more important and 'common' grievances prevailing in the various departments. The working papers, which formed the basis for discussions are listed in the annexure to this report. The first part of this report relates to matters of general import, which are of common interest to all development departments, and the second part relates to specific problems in the various development departments.

PART I

The causes for 'public grievances' among other things could be attributed to :-

- (a) Failure of the human element
- (b) Inherent defects in the administrative system.

Failure of the human element :

(1) It is a general complaint that public servants are not responsive to public feelings and public needs, that they are indifferent and apathetic to public representations and that very often they are discourteous towards the members of the public and their representatives. While it may not be possible

to redress a grievance immediately or in the near future, it would give a measure of satisfaction to the members of the public if they are given a patient and sympathetic hearing. This Group feels that it would be worthwhile to impart a very brief orientation training in 'Public Relations' to all levels of staff, who have to frequently come into contact with members of the public.

(2) Delays which very often lead to or is the cause of corruption could be minimised by close supervision and control, periodical and surprise inspections and effective disciplinary action. Non-official interference in matters of transfers and punishments should not be encouraged, and the Government Servants Conduct Rules in this regard should be strictly enforced. No public servant is likely to give of his best if he apprehends that his authority to control and discipline his subordinate staff is seriously jeopardised by external interference.

(3) Petitioners are driven from 'pillar to post' sometimes out of ignorance and at times deliberately. The lowest level of decision-making officers, who normally interview petitioners should be informed to give proper directions to petitioners. Large offices with staff strength of 100 and above, should have Reception Officers to give proper directions to the members of the public.

Inherent defects in administrative system

The possibility of taking action on the following points, which would minimise delays, may be considered in every Department.

- (1) Decentralisation and delegation of administrative, disciplinary and financial powers.
- (2) As far as is possible and practicable, introduce territorial jurisdiction of work, thereby reducing the area of management for a Field Officer, and increasing the intensity of supervision and control.
- (3) Reduce levels of decision-making by suitably amending the relevant statutes and executive directions.
- (4) Reduce the points for vertical movement of reports and horizontal movement of files, wherever feasible without detriment to the process of decision making.

- (5) Avoidance of unnecessary noting and avoidable paper work. Decisions should be taken on the basis of facts found in field reports and reference to relevant rules, procedures and precedents.
- (6) Devise ways and means of reducing the burden of paper work and accounting work on field technical Officers and thereby enable them to devote more time for extension work and redressal of 'public grievances'

PART II

In order to reduce the burden on the States' resources for the formulation and implementation of agricultural production schemes, it is necessary to utilise institutional credit through the Agricultural Refinance Corporation. Suitable projects to promote agricultural production, and development of fisheries dairying and poultry should be prepared and cleared by the Refinance Corporation. It will be worthwhile to have a Special Officer to accelerate this work and also laise with the Agricultural Refinance Corporation.

Agriculture and Co-operation

(1) Assignment of unobjectionable Government land for agricultural purpose is slow and has become a cause for serious 'public grievance'. This work should be given high priority and wherever necessary, special staff should be appointed to speed up the work.

(2) Demands for the cultivation of reserve forest land which consists only of shrub growth are being made in an organised manner and at some places there are also threats to, forcibly occupy reserve forest land. Early assignment of Government waste land to landless poor will to some extent, reduce the pressure on reserve forest land. Nevertheless, it is desirable to have a joint inspection of the Reserve Blocks, which contain only shrub growth, and determine how best these lands could be utilised with a view to satisfy, at least partly the hunger for land.

(3) Demand for the use of agricultural machinery for reclamation of land for agriculture is much beyond the availability of agricultural machinery. This defect should be rectified quickly by purchasing the requisite items of machinery.

(4) So far, there has been a general complaint that agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilisers and pesticides were not always of good quality and that they were not supplied in adequate quantities at the right time.

Hybrid seeds of cholam, cumbu and maize are produced by seed producers, who obtain the foundation seeds from the National Seeds Corporation. There have been several occasions when the certified seeds purchased from seed producers and distributed to ryots through Blocks were found to be of poor quality. It is desirable that the certification of these seeds is done by the State Agricultural Department. The Department produces primary seeds like paddy, groundnut from the State Seed Farms. The need for establishing a State seeds Corporation for the production of nuclear and primary seeds should be considered in view of the demand for large quantities of good quality seeds.

At present there are sufficient stocks of fertilisers, and it is reported that there will be no shortage of fertilisers in the near future. Even so, there are representations about non-availability of fertilisers in some areas and non-availability of required type of fertilisers in certain other areas. These facts indicate defects in the distribution system. This Group considers that the distribution of fertilisers should be done both by Co-operative and private agencies, and that there is no need for regulated and controlled distribution of fertilisers at present. There are several complaints about the poor quality of the Standard Mixtures manufactured by several manure Mixing Firms. Inspection and quality control by the Fertiliser Inspectorate should be vigorously enforced, and the Statute should be amended to increase the quantum of punishment on the manufacture of sub-standard mixtures. There have also been several complaints that unauthorised persons purchase straight fertilisers in the open market, prepare sub-standard mixtures and sell them as products belonging to registered firms. Vigorous Police action to detect these persons and root out this evil should be under taken.

There is also a general complaint that very often the fertilisers supplied through Blocks are of poor quality and that adequate quantities of superior types of fertilisers are not available. Strict quality control should be enforced and proper advice given by the Extension Staff on the use of fertilisers.

Agricultural implements and motor pumpsets get out of order very often, and the existing facilities for repairs and supply of spares are not adequate. Servicing units, preferably on

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Government have decided that all agricultural credit should be channelised through Co-operative institutions. Medium and long-Term credit are met by the Land Mortgage Banks. The procedure for the processing of loan applications and distribution of loans has been somewhat simplified. The present system should be allowed to work for sometime before steps to streamline the procedure further are considered. This Group however, feels that the Land Mortgage Banks should also act on loan applications completely and correctly processed by Gramasevaks or Revenue Inspectors who have hitherto been doing this job.

Medical

(1) Doctors and Nurses are over-worked resulting in deterioration in the quality of their work. This actually is a common public grievance. While this Group is aware of the limited availability of Doctors and Nurses in Government Hospitals, it considers that decision on the following matters should be taken.

- (a) Government Doctors should not do any private practice. They should be adequately compensated for the loss of private practice.
- (b) Yardsticks of work for Doctors, Nurses and other Medical and para-medical personnel should be determined.

(2) Another common complaint is the non-availability of certain drugs and medicines in Government Hospitals and Dispensaries. It is reported that the M. S. D. take a long time to send the 'non-availability' certificate and that only after receipt of this certificate, the Doctors are permitted to purchase the medicines in the open market. This Group considers that if the 'non-availability' certificate is not received within a month from the M. S. D. the Doctor should be allowed to purchase the necessary medicines, preferably from the manufacturers direct (at the rate at which the manufacturers supply the M. S. D.) without calling for quotations.

Irrigation :

(1) The main grievance is about timely and equitable distribution of water for irrigation from P. W. D.

sources. This Group considers that the P. W. D. may be given the sole responsibility of proper distribution of water for irrigation and also be vested with powers of prosecuting offenders, who resort to irregular irrigation or cause damage to irrigation works.

(2) The P. W. D. staff may also be vested with powers to prosecute encroachers of P. W. D. lands by suitably amending the statute.

(3) Delays in investigation, preparation of estimates and execution could be minimised by

- (a) using experience and efficient technical staff
- (b) setting time-limits for the completion of each stage of work
- (c) contact R. D. O. or Collector to obtain quick reports from the Tahsildars.
- (d) permit the technical officers to give works on nomination if there is no answer to the first tender call.

Education

(1) Considering the large number of Teachers under the control of this Department, the service problems of many of them constituted the main area for grievances. Delays are said to be chronic. While decentralisation and delegation of powers to lower authorities are necessary, other steps to streamline the department and its procedures are called for. This Group considers that it will be a worthwhile study for the Madras Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration.

In conclusion, this Group does not consider it necessary to have a separate grievance Officer in each Department and in each District with a separate grievance procedure to follow. Public servants at all levels should consider themselves as 'grievance officers' i. e. public servants, in the real sense of the term, who should find prompt and correct answer to the representations from the public. At the same time, public servants at all levels should foresee problems likely to arise in the near future and take advance action to tackle those problems as soon as they arise without neglecting them, and allowing them to become grievances.

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ANNEXURE

Working Papers forming basis for discussions.

- (1) Brief Note on Working Papers by Thiru K. Venkata-raman, IAS, Secretary and Treasurer, Madras Regional Branch, Indian Institute of Public Administration.
- (2) Working paper on Redressal of Public Grievances with special reference to Agriculture Department by Thiru A. Radhakrishnan, B. Sc. (Agri), Chief Inspector of Fertilisers, Directorate of Agriculture, Madras.
- (3) Working paper on 'Redressal of Public Grievances with special reference to the Co-operative Department by Thiru S. T. Vaidyalingam, M. A. M. Litt., Deputy Registrar (Consumers' Co-operation), Office of the Registrar of Co-op. Societies, Madras.
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MACHINERY AND PROCEDURE FOR REDRESS OF CITIZENS' GRIEVANCES

Prepared by

**ANDHRA PRADESH REGIONAL BRANCH OF
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,
HYDERABAD.**

1. Introduction : The Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi has been requested by the Administrative Reforms Commission appointed by the Government of India for preparing a report on the Machinery and procedure for the Redressal of Citizens Grievances. In pursuance of this objective, the Indian Institute of Public Administration was planning to conduct a field survey in one of the Districts of Andhra Pradesh (West Godavari) to study the problem at the District and Sub-district levels. The Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration at Hyderabad volunteered to undertake this work on behalf of the Headquarters and this report is prepared in that connection.

2. At the outset, it was decided to draft a questionnaire. which would pin-point the problems connected with the matter. It was noted that while the higher levels of administration had received considerable attention, those which may be appropriately called the "cutting-edge" levels viz., the District, the Taluka and the Block have not so far been studied in detail. In practice, however, it is at these levels that the majority of the citizens meet the administration and have dealings with it. In fact, Government is judged by the citizens largely from their experience at these levels rather than by solemn pronouncements at the State and National levels. It is therefore necessary to study how grievances are brought to the notice of the administration at the 'cutting-edge' and how they are dealt with at these levels.

3. It might also be borne in mind that the general calibre of functionaries that work at these levels is somewhat poor. While at the State and National levels, well-trained and well qualified officers who are both experienced and seasoned normally deal with matters connected with the public, at the lower levels the experience as well as the background of the officers is often inadequate. This, in turn, raises problems both of efficiency and integrity; the widespread dis-satisfaction of the public with the administrative authorities in the country today, is the result of deficiencies in both these respects at the

lower levels of administration. A study therefore of the problems involved in the method of Redressal of Grievances at the lower levels of administration is of considerable interest with a view to formulating specific recommendations for their improvement.

4. A questionnaire prepared by the Regional Branch is enclosed as an enclosure to this report. It is seen broadly from it that the questionnaire identifies five separate aspects of the problems. The first is the mode of representation of the grievances which includes how grievances are brought to the attention of the administration: Is the representation made orally or is it written? Are such representations carefully registered in the offices receiving them? Is an acknowledgement given to such a representation? The second aspect of the questionnaire deals with their disposal: this is procedural in nature to find out how the applications are dealt with in the office. Is there a summary disposal or is there any elaborate procedure? Is there any method by which the progress of disposal is kept track of? How are examinations done in the Office? The third aspect refers to the desision making, which is indeed the heart of the matter: How are decisions taken on these applications? Are they merely dependent on the subordinate officers or is an independent assessment made on the representations? Are decisions communicated to the applicants in time, and if so, are they informed of the reasons why a particular request has been rejected? The next section deals with the appellate processes involved in the disposal of such petitions. This is important since although the power of disposal is sometimes vested in the lower level officers, there is a power of review at the higher levels which is to be exercised wherever necessary. The last section deals with the miscellaneous aspects on the difficulties involved in the redressal of grievances, with the working of the Vigilance Commission and the proposal to appoint an Ombudsman. It was also requested to indicate whether any other matter connected with this problem have been left out.

5. The questionnaire was circulated to various officers both at the District level and in the Taluk and Block levels. In the case of the two latter levels, The District Collectors were themselves requested to pass on the questionnaire to suitable officers and to forward their answers together with their comments. In addition, State Level Heads of Departments as well as Secretariat Officers who normally deal with the public grievances were also requested to indicate their view points. A few officers that deal with specialised institutions like the

General Manager of the Co-operative Consumers Stores were also requested to indicate their views in the matter. Due to their other pre-occupations the response to the questionnaire has not been too satisfactory, but some replies have been received on the basis of which, and on the basis of the general experience available to the members of the Regional Branch, the following report is prepared :

II. Mode of Representation :

6. It must however made clear that the word "grievances" is an all-inclusive term and much depends upon the exact nature of the grievances. Sometimes, grievances are of a purely personal nature such as having been overlooked for promotions or transfers having been made at an inconvenient time. These are not dealt with in this report, since it is assumed that there are already specific rules dealing with such cases in the conduct rules applicable to the public servants. There are also some grievances which are *prima facie* not 'redressable' such as an increased sugar quota or rice ration without any valid reason. The main emphasis in this report is on grievances of the public or the ordinary citizen and not of a specialised category such as the public servants themselves. It is considered that it is necessary to draw this distinction since grievances of the employees of the Government themselves have to be treated in a separate category.

7. The normal procedure of making representation is in writing. Quite often this is accompanied by the petitioner himself going to the public office and explaining his difficulty orally also. Most Departments, however, insist that in addition to the oral representations, a representation in writing should also be received. In the case of organisations like the Road Transport Corporation, complaint books are maintained in the vehicles and these are periodically checked at the Head Office. In some departments like the Inspector General of Registrations, representations are invariably in writing and oral representations are not taken into account. Many offices have a system of Complaint Boxes wherein representations can be dropped by the applicants. Most officers have designated specific times during the working hours of the day for receiving such representations. For instance, the Road Transport Corporation displays a notice that interviews are to be held only between 11-00 A.M. and 12-00 Noon. In practice however, officers receive representations on all working days without any specific time being allotted for this purpose. It is, however, seen that in offices like the Collector's Office where the representations tend to be large, it is not possible to hear all the repre-

sentations on a single day and very often the applicants are requested to come the next day.

8. The facilities available for the applicants who go to the offices to make representation varies a great deal. While in most Collector's Offices and at the State level offices, accommodation is provided for visitors to wait before obtaining the interview, the facilities available at the lower level offices such as Taluka Offices and Block Offices are very inadequate. In most cases, applicants have to wait under the shadow of a tree (if there is one) and wait long hours before they can make the representation to the officers concerned. It would seem that a specific recommendation that suitable facilities such as places to wait should invariably be made available in all public offices would be a useful one in ensuring that the public are not put to undue difficulty in making such representations. Complaint and Suggestion Boxes can be installed in all public offices at prominent places and complaints may be encouraged to use them rather than wait endlessly to meet an officer. But it is essential that the petitions dropped in the boxes are taken out daily and action is taken on them; otherwise the public will quickly lose confidence in such devices.

9. There is a psychological satisfaction for most applicants to meet the Head of the department himself rather than drop it in an impersonal complaint box or give it to a lower level officer, even if the request is not always accepted. However, in view of the fact that most District Officers and State level officers have touring schedules, it seems desirable if a programme of staying at the Headquarters on designated dates of week is announced and adhered to as far as possible. It is obviously a matter of great inconvenience to applicants coming from fairly long distances when the Head of the Office is not available to hear the representation. It is therefore to be recommended that Heads of Offices should try to adhere to a programme of attending the office on specific days of the week which could be given publicity so that those who wish to see them on those days could do so without much difficulty. It is of course to be emphasised that the practice of some officers at the District level not attending office even though they are at headquarters should be checked very severely. It is utterly wrong for public servants to conduct official work from their residences and to ask the public to come there for making any representation.

10. The touring schedules of the Government officers should also be given due publicity so that those who wish to

meet them could do so without having to go to the district headquarters or the State Capital. Very often District Officers are reluctant to draw up a tour programme well in advance and, what is more important, to adhere to it faithfully. It is recognised that at times some difficulty arises in conforming to a tour programme drawn up well in advance, but what is needed is really a willingness to do so, and in case a change becomes inevitable, due publicity should be given to this as soon as possible so that the public are aware that there has been a change in the tour programme of the concerned officer. Heads of Offices should utilise the tours to inspect the progress of disposal of petitions received in Taluk offices as well as in the submission of reports on petitions forwarded by the Head Office.

11. One of the questions which was asked in the questionnaire was whether representations are preferably to be made by individuals themselves or accompanied by others such as influential members of the public or Members of the Legislature. Some organisations such as the Road Transport Corporation had no objection to representations being sponsored by those other than the affected individuals. But on the other hand, many officers expressed a preference that representations should as far as possible be made directly unless large number of persons or a policy matter such as grant of remissions of Land Revenue were involved. It seems desirable if a Code of Conduct is prescribed that unless a representation involves a matter of policy, Members of the Legislature should not normally sponsor individual representations which might embarrass the officers concerned in arriving at a decision. Where however the applicant is illiterate or is unable to put forward his representation in a cogent matter, it may be necessary that some other person will have to represent on his behalf. No objection need be taken normally to such procedure by any officer of the Government.

12. The procedure adopted in keeping track of the representations varies from one organisation to another. In the Road Transport Corporation written representations are registered by the Distribution Clerk and checked by an Assistant Personnel Officer of the Corporation. Acknowledgements are not usually sent on routine petitions as their number is likely to be large in the Corporation. However, when the subject matter of the petition is important or when it is from a responsible person acknowledgement is issued within a few days. In the case of the I. G. of Registration and Stamps written representations are invariably registered in Petitions Register under the usual

Currents Register. An officer of the rank of Assistant Inspector General checks the register periodically and is maintained under his supervision. An acknowledgement is invariably sent to the petitioner if the final reply is likely to take time or where reports are to be called from the subordinate officers. In other cases, the final reply itself is sent within a week's time. In the collector's Office written representations are registered as new currents under the instructions of the District Office Manual. These are treated like any other paper received in the office and these are recorded in the Distribution Register before being distributed to the concerned clerk who then enters it in a Personal Register. The Personal Register is maintained by the clerk concerned, while the distribution register is maintained by the Superintendent. These registers are checked by the Collector himself, the Joint Collector (if there is one) and the P.A. to Collector, who is of the rank a Deputy Collector. Acknowledgement on representations are not given as a matter of course, unless the matter is important and does not lend itself to a quick decision.

13. The position thus at the State Headquarters and the District Headquarters is not entirely unsatisfactory. However, at the Taluka or the Block levels the position seems to be much less satisfactory. This is partly due to the individual calibre of the personnel and the larger number of applications received at these offices from the public. Although there a similar procedure should be followed in these offices and that all representation received from the public should be registered it is doubtful whether it is adhered to in practice in most cases. The check exercised by the Heads of Offices viz. the Tahsildar or the Block Development officer in this matter is usually perfunctory. It is feared that not enough attention is paid to it and there is need for keeping a close watch on the representations received and the action taken on them. Acknowledgements of such representations is rarely ever done in these offices and, in most cases, applicants are not even aware as to what has happened to their representations. It seems therefore desirable that both at the Taluka and the Block Offices strict instructions are given as to the manner of registering the applications received and insist on a periodic check by the Head Office himself as to the action taken on them. This should be counter-checked by supervising officers such as the Revenue Divisional Officers (in case of the Block Offices) and the District Collectors himself in case of the Tahsil Office. It is only by such frequent inspections of superior officers and the importance attached to this matter that subordinate officers at the Block and Taluka level can be impressed with the need to pay proper attention to this matter.

14. It may be desirable to insist in all offices for maintenance of a Petitions Register apart from the Distribution and Personal Register. All petitions received in the offices should be entered in it and the action taken on it should be indicated. This should be checked by the officer second in command atleast once a week and the Head of the Office at least once in a fortnight. In this manner all petitions are kept separately track of instead of being let in the personal register.

III. DISPOSAL OF APPLICATIONS :

15. Representations received at the Head Offices are usually opened by an officer who is second or third in command and then distributed to the concerned divisional heads depending on the nature of the complaint and the action that needs to be taken. In the case of the Road Transport Corporation such complaints are forwarded to the Heads of Departments, Divisional Controllers or Depot Managers. Where representations are received by the General Manager himself the action taken on it is indicated by him, if he is aware of the problem, or otherwise the petition is sent to the office for remarks and previous papers. In Organisation such as the Consumer Stores quick disposal is specially important and the action to be taken is dictated immediately to the Stenographer. In the case of the I.G. of Registration and Stamps, the course of action to be taken depend on the nature of the representation. If it is a complaint against a gazetted officer of the department, action is taken by the I.G. personally; otherwise, it is sent to the office to be registered and to be dealt with in the normal manner. If the complaint is against the delay in his office, papers are called for immediately and the matter is looked into. Where the matter involves the offices of the District Registrar, these are passed on to them for their reports.

16. In the Collector's Office, representations are normally sent to the concerned section for examination. Where representations lend themselves to specific directions, the course of action that is to be taken is endorsed on the petition itself. For instance, if a political sufferer submits the necessary documents and request for the assignment of Government land, an immediate endorsement is made that the Tahsildar concerned should be requested to send up the necessary proposal to the Revenue Divisional Officer. In most cases, however, such specific endorsements are not usually given. The papers are sent in a routine fashion to the concerned section who takes considerable time before they are put up to the Officer for specific directions. This usually takes at least 10 to 15 days,

and in many cases, even longer. Thus even to initiate action not he petition, it takes at least two weeks before the matter begins to move.

17. The position in respect of the Taluka and Block offices is even worse. Quite often, petitions lie in the offices for long periods without any specific action being taken. There is no sense of urgency by the clerical personnel of these offices about petitions, particularly if these are from poor or illiterate persons; where petitions are given or sponsored by influential persons action tends to be taken rather quickly, but in the case of non-influential public, action is usually delayed considerably. It is for this reason that the register mentioned above would be useful in enabling the Head of the office to keep a close watch on the progress of the petitions and to determine whether suitable action has been initiated on it.

18. Greater use should be made of modern devices for the speedy disposal of petitions received in public offices. In fact the lack of elementary amenities in most public offices such as Electricity or Telephones is a great handicap in reaching quick decisions on such petitions. But even where such amenities are available there is a tendency on the part of officers to use them reluctantly for this purpose. Quite often, where the information required can be obtained or the matter discussed with another officer on telephone, recourse is taken in writing letters which take a considerable length of time. It is felt that unless inter office communication is in writing and information is obtained on paper it would not be safe for the officer to take a decision purely on a telephonic conversation. While in matters of importance or where accounts are involved, written communication are essential it need not always be insisted upon and a note recorded by an officer that he had spoken to another officer and obtained the information should really be adequate. It is therefore recommended that officers at all levels should be encouraged to take greater advantage of the modern amenities already installed in their offices and to insist such amenities should be installed wherever they are lacking at present. In this manner it would be possible to make decisions on most applications much quicker than is otherwise possible through a routine method of writing letters which is the practice that is currently followed in most offices.

19. Anonymous petitions are often received by most Government departments. The action to be taken on them has been laid down by Government in their instructions, but in many cases there is a certain ambiguity in these instructions.

Where anonymous petitions are vague, no action is required to be taken, but where specific allegations are made, it is usually considered desirable to look into them and verify *prima facie* whether there is any substance in such allegations. In practice, however, it is difficult to make a distinction between these two types of anonymous petitions. The practice of completely ignoring the anonymous petition would seem to be a more healthy practice, since a complainant who does not wish to identify himself does not normally deserve credence. It seems to be desirable to insist that only applicants who are identifiable be entertained and the anonymous petitions of any kind be disregarded in the interests of better morale of the officers. Naturally, such rule has to be relaxed in institutions like Consumer Stores where allegations of leakage and duplication have to be looked into; even if anonymous.

20. No time limit generally is set for taking action on the representations received in the offices. However, in institutions like Road Transport Corporation time limits are set for reports to the General Manager on important representations made to him. In routine Departments like the I.G. of Registration and Stamps or the Revenue Department, such time limit are not set. It would seem desirable if in most cases time limits are set which would take into account the actual work involved in reaching a decision. The Head of the Office should call for reports on the due dates from the office. This is really matter of judgement of the Head of Office to enable him to keep a track of the petitions after a reasonable length of time. The checking of registers is useful but it would also be useful if every month a list of pending petitions are given to the Head of the Office. If necessary, the latter could take a list with him on his tours, to ascertain at what stage the petitions are with the field officers. It is only through such constant and vigilant check that the public can gain the confidence that their petitions are looked into and suitable action, whether favourable or unfavourable, is taken at a reasonably early date.

21. Investigations in most cases are not done by the Head Office, and are usually delegates to the subordinate officers. Where representations are against the subordinate officers themselves or where they are considered important, the Head of the office conducts the investigations. But in practice it is seen that most matters are left to the subordinate officers either in the Head Office or at the field. Inspections are also done by the subordinate officers, but it would seem desirable if in some cases, at least, these inspection are counter-checked by the Heads of the Office themselves with a view to ascertain the

veracity of such inspections made by the subordinate officers. Of course, in important matters involving major disputes, it is desirable for the Head of Office himself to undertake the investigations personally. But the point sought to be made above is that even in the less important cases, a certain percentage should invariably be checked by the Head of the office so as to ensure for himself that his field officers are functioning properly. This would also enable the Head office to assesss the report making powers of his subordinate officers and to give corresponding weightage to such reports. It is found that this varies considerably from one officer to the other and it is therefore considered necessary that the Head of the office makes an individual assessment of his subordinates. This would also instill a greater care by the subordinate officers in the field inspections since there is always a possibility that it would be counter-checked by the superior officers.

22. One of the major difficulties experienced by most persons who have to deal with the Government Offices is the difficulty to find out at what stage their representations stand, even after many weeks of delay. Quite often, persons are forced to go to the clerical personnel which opens the way for corruption. It is desirable to lay down a procedure whereby a middle cadre officers is designated to answer inquiries from the public as to the stage at which their representations stand. The practice of the public going to the sections themselves should be discouraged. The officers so designated should have sufficient authority to be able to ascertain where the matter stands and be able to communicate it to the petitioner in an affable manner. Although a suggestion has been made in the past to open Enquiry Counters in Government offices, this has not proved in practice successful since a clerk of the rank of a UDC is placed incharge of it and he does not have sufficient authority to be able to ascertain the progress of the petition. If, therefore, an Enquiry Counter is proposed to be opened in an offices, the persons manning it should be sufficiently senior to be able to perform genuine service to the public.

IV DECISION MAKING :

23. The time for making a decision on representation naturally depends upon the nature of the request made in the petition. A representation of a trivial nature such as for getting additional quota of sugar takes only a few hours for disposal, while a request for assignment of land may take a month or two, and in urban areas such as Hyderabad City,even longer. In an organisation like the Road Transport Corporation where the representation refers to arrears of salary, decision are taken

normally within a week, but where information has to be obtained from a Divisional Officers or depots, the time taken is much longer. In all cases independent assessments are made by the decision making officers on reports of the subordinate officers. Naturally, a certain amount of weightage is given to the reports of the subordinate officer. In the consumer stores, there is a greater weightage given to the customer for goodwill and better business except where it constitutes a reflection on the personnel of the Stores themselves. Where the representations are in the nature of complaints against subordinate officers, the time taken is much larger since if they are serious, enquiries would have to be conducted which are often time consuming.

24. A decision taken is normally communicated to the applicant, in the case of rejection of a representation, reasons for the rejection are given, but in many cases these tend to be grave and perfunctory. It would seem desirable if a more uniform standard is followed in this matter of informing the applicant the reasons for the rejection. Vague impersonal reasons such as are normally given in Government communications leave the applicant wondering why his request has been rejected and in fact leads him to wrong conclusions of attributing it to personal motives or prejudices. It seems therefore desirable to err on the side of giving more information rather than giving less. In respect of the Taluk and Block level officers the practice of communicating decisions on request made is much less developed and tends to be even less satisfactory than in the case of the District and State level officers.

25. There is well defined appellate process in respect of most decisions taken by Government officers. For instance a decision given by a Tahsil Officer is subject to appeal either to the Revenue Divisional Officer or to the District Collector. In the case of the latter an appeal lies to the Board of Revenue and subsequently to the Government. Similarly, in the case of the District level Officers appeal may be made to the Heads of departments in the first instance, and secondly to the Government. In the case of the Block office, however, the appellate process is not so well defined; blocks being autonomous bodies under the Panchayat Raj system, sometimes tend to behave as if their decisions are not subject to appeal on review. It seems desirable to insist that decisions taken by the Block should be appealable either to the Revenue Divisional Officer (who is the inspecting officer) or to the Secretary, Zilla Parishad. It is also desirable that such power of appeal should be vested in an individual and not in any committee, since the

power of the committee to take a decision on such matters is often limited.

V. MISCELLANEOUS :

26. The general feeling amongst the Heads of offices is that the present procedures for the Redressal of Citizen's Grievances are fairly satisfactory and needs to be improved only in a few respects. Many of them complain that this is not possible at the moment due to lack of finance. As regards corruption, there is a satisfactory co-ordination with the Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Vigilance Commission. The suggestion that an Ombudsman might be appointed has evoked a mixed opinion from the officers consulted. Some feel that such an official vested with high authority would be able to inculcate a greater sense of honesty and integrity in the administration. On the other hand, it is felt that speed and efficiency might be affected and there would be a tendency to play safe without taking tasks involved in good administration. As one officer put it: "It is better to violate a rule in good faith than to fail to get a job done in quick time". Another question which was considered was about the loss of file which are frequently reported from Government offices. In well established Government offices where a system of personal registers and weekly submission of pendency lists is well developed, the loss of files seems to be rather rare but in some of the newer organisations which have been set up it may be desirable to introduce specific procedural methods so that such instances do not occur.

27. There has been noted in recent years an increasing tendency to take recourse to direct action methods for redressal of grievances. For instance the agitation against the introduction of Hindi in Madras, against the special land levy in Andhra Pradesh and the border disputes in Mysore are instances. There seems to be a feeling amongst the public that unless violent action is taken by them, the authorities concerned would not normally take notice of their difficulties. Perhaps, with improved methods for the Redressal of Citizens' Grievances in Government offices, this tendency is likely to be curbed and the public will feel more confident that the normal methods which are available to them are adequate for obtaining solution to their problems. The grievances of special sections of the Community such as Harijans, girijans, linguistic minorities etc., are not specially catered to at the district and the block levels. It is desirable that the problems of this backward groups and the disabilities which they suffer should be paid special attention since the feeling of apprehension is always

most acute amongst the minorities in any area. District Officers as well as officers of the Taluk and the Block levels should therefore be impressed with the need to keep a constant watch on the problems posed by such groups and to take effective steps to remove them as quickly as possible.

VI CONCLUSION :

28. For effective and speedy redressal of grievances, a greater delegation of powers and authority at all levels is required. Quite often delays occur because even in simple matters, orders have to be sought from a superior officer which inevitably takes time. Even where such power has been delegated on paper, there is a tendency to curb its usage in practice and to insist on reference and consultation by the subordinate officer. There should on the other hand be an encouragement to take quick decision and a confidence that such decision will be supported if taken for genuine reasons. It is only by such encouragement and support that officers at the lower levels which deal with the public are encouraged to effectively and speedily attempt to redress grievances of citizens.

29. In the ultimate analysis it is felt that the problem of Redressal of Citizens' Grievances is a human one. It is the approach which officers at all levels bring to this problem that is of paramount importance and not the specific nature of decision taken in most cases. The public in most cases are fair minded enough to realise the justice of the rejection of their representation if this is properly explained to them. What is required is in the manner their representations are dealt with and courtesy in Government offices when dealing with the public.

(x) Anonymous petitions should not be normally considered.

(xi) Reasonable time limits should be set for the disposal of applications and the Heads of offices should ensure that these time limits are adhered to as far as possible.

(xii) Investigations should be conducted by the Heads of offices in all important matters and even in routine cases a certain percentage of petitions should be looked into by them. This would enable them to keep a closer watch on the work of the subordinate officers and also to ensure that the latter performs their functions diligently.

(xiii) Decisions taken on representations should be communicated invariably to the applicant and in case of rejection

adequate reasons must be given for the decision. Vague reason such are normally given in Government communications should be avoided.

(xiv) In Panchayati Raj Institutions a right of appeal against the decisions of the Samiti should be provided for and such an appeal should normally lie to an individual rather than to a Committee.

APPENDIX—1.

Copy of the Questionnaire circulated by the Regional Branch of Indian Institute of Public Administration, Hyderabad.

1. MODE OF REPRESENTATION :

- (a) How are representations made normally by the public? What is the percentage roughly of oral and written representation ?
- (b) In case of oral representations, do you allot any specific time or days in your office for hearing them ?
- (c) Is there any difficulty experienced by those who wish to meet you ?
- (d) Do you prefer representations to be made by the individuals themselves or accompanied by others like Members of the Legislature ?
- (e) In case of written representation what is the procedure adopted in your office regarding the registration of such applications ?
- (f) Who maintains the register, if any, and who checks it? Do you yourself check the register periodically or occasionally ?
- (g) Is any acknowledgement given to a representation, even a routine one that the matter is receiving attention ? If so how soon do you give such an acknowledgement ? If not, why is it not done ?

2. DISPOSAL OF APPLICATIONS :

- (a) In case of representations what is the method you follow regarding the disposal ? Do you send it to office and have it examined by them or do you indicate the action to be taken on it ?

- (b) In case of anonymous petitions, do you take any action or does your action depend upon the nature of the representation made in the petition ?
- (c) Do you set apart any time limit for the disposal of representations ?
- (d) How do you keep track of the petitions ?
- (e) Do you undertake investigations by yourself in any matter ? If so could you indicate the type of the representations in which you yourself make the investigation ?
- (f) Do you rely on personal inspections or on reports of subordinate officers in most cases ?

3. DECISION MAKING :

- (a) How long does it take for a decision to reach normally on a petition ? If this depends upon the nature of the petition please indicate some typical types of representations and the time taken to decide in each case.
- (b) Do you merely forward the decision reached by your subordinate officers or do you also give any specific assessment ?
- (c) Do you communicate the decision to the applicant ? In case of rejection, do you also give any specific reason why his representation has been rejected ?

4. APPELLATE PROCESS :

- (a) Do you think that the appellate process in operation is inadequate ?
- (b) In hearing appellate cases, do you tend to agree normally with the decisions of the subordinate officers.

5. MISCELLANEOUS :

- (a) Apart from the above, could you indicate what in your opinion are the practical difficulties in the Redressal of Citizens' Grievances ? Give instances of important cases in your field of activity ?
- (b) Have you any contacts with the Anti-Corruption Bureau or the Vigilance Commission ? Do you think

that the coordination between those Departments and yours is adequate ? If not in what manner do you think this should be strengthened ?

- (c) Have you any specific views on the appointment of "Ombudsman" at the State level ? Do you think that the District Collector or Head of the Department can discharge these functions at district level ?
- (d) Instances are reported in the Press occasionally about loss of files. Do you think that this happens any considerable scale in your office ? If so, could you suggest any specific remedies to rectify the situation ?
- (e) Do you feel that in recent years there has been a growing tendency to seek redressal through direct action methods, as in the case of Anti-Hindi agitation in Madras, or the agitation against the Special Levy in Andhra Pradesh ?
- (f) Do you have any special staff to redress grievances of special sections of the community such as the Harijans, Girijans and the linguistic minorities or any other backward people ?
- (g) Would you make any additional remarks in the problem which in your opinion has not been covered above ?

Please forward your reply on a separate sheet of papers to :

Dr. Ram K. Vepa, I.A.S.,

Honorary Secretary, IIPA and

Managing Director,

A. P. Industrial Development Corporation,

Post Box No. 13;

B-1-174, Fateh Maidan Road,

Hyderabad-4.

APPENDIX-II

List of officers to whom the Questionnaire has been forwarded :

1. Collector, Visakhapatnam.
2. Joint Collector, Visakhapatnam.
3. Collector, Hyderabad.
4. Joint Collector, Hyderabad.
5. Collector, West Godavari.
6. Director, Industries and Commerce.
7. Director, Employment.
8. Director, Public Instruction.
9. Registrar of Co-operative Societies.
10. Managing Director of the Co-operative Consumer Stores.
11. General Manager, Road Transport Corporation.
12. Inspector-General, Registration and Stamps.
13. Deputy Secretary, General Administration Department.
14. Select Taluka and Block Development Officers.

**Extract from "MACHINERY AND PROCEDURES FOR
REDRESS OF CITIZENS' GRIEVANCES"**

by

Prof : V. JAGANNADHAM

&

Thiru. H. R. MAKHIJA

(Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.)

**SUMMARY OF OUR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.**

(Our recommendations are underlined. Those in the nature of suggestions for further study are marked with asterisk (*). Others are in the nature of facts and findings).

A. Nature of applications :

1. In the sample studied by us, there is a proponderance of simple-routine cases (64%); complex cases are about half that number (34%).
2. The number of complex cases declines perceptibly as one goes down the area levels.

B. Channels through which applications are received :

3. Only 19% of the total applications in our sample were received through Ministers and 7% from MPs., MLAs, etc.—comprising about one-fourth of the total lot.
4. There is need for further enquiry whether it was really necessary for the citizens to submit their applications through the Ministers. A further probe into the reasons which motivate the citizen to submit his application to a Minister would seem to be worth-while the effort.

C. Diarising of applications :

5. In comparison with the large number of applications which are diarised, the number of applications which are not diarised is quite small (only 3%), but consider-

ing the importance of diarising, this small percentage seems to be quite serious.

6. All applications from the public should be diarised in a separate petition register.

D. Acknowledgement of applications :

7. The number of acknowledgeable and non-acknowledgeable applications is almost equally divided. Of the acknowledgeable applications, a little less than one-third are actually acknowledgeable.
8. Non-acknowledgement of applications constitutes a deplorable communication gap, which can, and should be filled up so as to improve the image of administration in the eyes of the people.

E. Handling of applications by Officers in Dak Stage :

9. A large number of applications (86%) are submitted to Officers in dak stage, but only a small number (8%) are disposed of by the officers themselves.
10. The nature of applications - routine - simple or complex - hardly makes any difference as far as disposal by officers in dak-stage is concerned. Paradoxical though it may seem, it also appears that the larger the number of simple-routine cases, the higher the proportion of direct disposal by officers.
- *11. The paradox mentioned above needs a deeper probe through further studies.

F. Delays :

12. Only one-fourth of the total cases are disposed of in the normal time. The remaining three-fourths are delayed.
13. It is not merely the complexity of rules, regulations and procedures that lead to delays; obviously, laxity of the Administration and supervision, lack of interest and of spirit of responsibility, lack of sensitivity towards public interest may be some of the other contributory factors.
14. The extent of delay goes on decreasing as one goes down the area level.

15. One of the major cause of delays appears to be the inter-departmental references or references to subordinates.
16. Inter-departmental/office references should be done only when absolutely necessary and simultaneously (if more than one office is to be consulted.) The reference should be complete listing all the points on which consultation is to be done. Control over subordinate offices for prompt reply should be tightened.
17. Specifying time limits for disposal of applications has not made any significant impact on the speed of disposal.
- *18. This would seem to point to the need for probing the problem further with special reference to the role of morale and motivation of the personnel involved at all hierarchical levels.
19. Delays occur both at the lower hierarchical levels (the level of a Section Officer/Superintendent and below) and at higher ones (above the Section Officer). The extent of delay at the lower levels is slightly greater than that at the higher levels. The major contributory causes of delay are delays in subordinate offices combined with lack of follow-up action.

G. Personnel Problems :

20. Three-fourths of the staff feel that the work-load on them is heavy or very heavy. The number of higher officers who complained to us of heavy work-load through wastage of their time in infructuous work, meetings, conferences, etc., was also quite large.
- *21. The problem of efficiency of staff needs to be examined in detail through further study with an eye on more progressive personnel policies and more enlightened human approach.
- *22. It is for consideration whether applications etc., of Government employees pending for more than one year should not be brought within the purview of Lokpal and Lokayukta in so far as delays, as distinct from the merits of the case are concerned.

23. Opinion about the adequacy and efficiency of the present O & M Organisation was divided; some officers even said that the O & M Authority had never visited their offices.
24. There is need for strengthening the O & M Organisation and ensuring regular inspections and work-study in all offices with a view to eliminating infructuous work, improving work procedures and achieving greater work productivity.
25. There is also need for laying down the scale of penalties like warnings, adverse confidentials, etc., for chronic defaulters; just as there is need for a scale of incentives like letters of appreciation, prizes etc., for consistently good workers.

H. Rules, regulations and manuals.

26. Simplification of manuals and bringing them up-to-date in a consolidated manner and preparation of one where none exists need urgent attention.

I. Public Relations Officer.

27. While it should not be a part of the duties of the Public Relations Officer to deal with citizen's grievances, the objectives of this office could relate essentially to educating and informing the people and to keep Government informed of the reaction of citizens towards Government policies and programmes.

J. Machinery for dealing with citizens' applications.

I. At the State level.

28. A separate institution of the State Director for citizens grievances does not seem to be necessary. We recommend instead that the Secretaries to Government in a Secretariat Department and the head of the Department in the attached and subordinate offices should be designated as the ex-officio grievance officer for that particular department with the functions as defined in the main body of the report.
29. The ex-officio grievance officer in a Secretariat/ Technical Department should be provided with the assistance, full-time if possible and part-time other

wise, of an other departmental officer, who may be designated as the departmental Deputy Grievance Officer with the duties as defined in the main body of the report.

II. At the District level and below.

30. We recommend that the District Collector/Deputy Commissioner should be designated as the Ex-officio Grievance Officer at the District Level with the functions as defined in the main body of the report.
31. To enable the Collector to discharge his duties as District Grievance Officer efficiently and effectively without detriment to his other functions, he should be provided with the assistance of (a full time officer if possible and part-time otherwise) of an other officer who should be designated as the Assistant District Grievance Officer, with duties as defined in the main body of the report.
32. The Assistant Grievance Officer should be provided with the Assistance of a full-time senior clerk or assistant to help him in the routine side of his work, who should preferably know shorthand and typing. By way of incentive, such clerk and Assistant should be given suitable allowance.

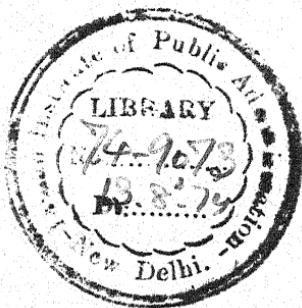
K. District Grievances Committees.

- *33. Before the District Grievances Committees are formed in any State, the working of the present District Grievance Committees in Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh need to be studied in greater detail.
- *34. It is also for consideration whether the encouragement of Citizens' Advice Bureaux on Voluntary basis would be more effective than formation of District Grievances Committees.
35. All applications should invariably be acknowledged under the signature of the Section Officer/Superintendent/Head Clerk or the P.A. to the Minister or officer concerned, except those belonging to certain categories mentioned in the main report.
36. Applications from Citizens should be allotted either of the two categories simple and complex and should be

finally disposed of within the time limit indicated against each category in the Main Report.

37. An application should be treated as a file in itself on its diary number unless there are some compelling reasons to the contrary.
38. In order to reduce the halting time of papers at various levels, officers and staff should be required to process the case as completely as possible within three clear working days of their receipt.
39. The number of levels required to put up notes should be reduced and defined, keeping in view the principles enunciated in the main body of the report.
40. Failure to take action where action is due or taking incomplete action because of ignorance of rules or because of inadequate attention to the details of the cases should be regarded as grave dereliction of duty and dealt with as such.
41. Attempts at tossing of papers and roping in others where action or decision is the sole responsibility of the officer himself should be taken serious note of and suitable action should be taken against the defaulting officer.
42. Where it is necessary for the competent officer to call for a report of the subordinate offices, before giving his decision, the report should be called for in the manner indicated in the main body of the report.
43. A departmental officer going out on tour to a particular area (District/Tahsil/Taluk or Block) should take with him a list of all cases on which reports/comments asked for from the officers in the area to be visited are pending. The Officer should expedite, and if possible bring back with him the reports/comments.
44. Applications received by higher authorities by way of an endorsement should not be forwarded for report or for action where it is clear that its copy has already gone to the officer competent to take action. In other cases, the copy should simply be forwarded to such officer for necessary action under intimation to the applicant, alongside this, it is necessary that serious view should be taken of officers who fail to exercise the delegated powers and responsibilities.

45. Appeals should be reviewed in accordance with the procedure indicated in the main body of the report.
46. Clear-cut instructions for handling of applications from citizens should be laid down for the guidance of officers on the lines of the model suggested by us in Appendix VII.
47. Instructions should also be laid down on the lines indicated by us in Appendix VIII and published for the guidance of the public.
48. By way of implementation and follow-up of our recommendations the supervision and inspection need to be considerably improved and strengthened. As a part of this, particular attention needs to be paid to the preparation and scrutiny of weekly and monthly statements of pending cases.
49. The procedure to be laid down as a result of our recommendations should be followed from-time-to-time so as to bring to light the weak spots needing corrective action.



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